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THE

DEMON OF SICILY.

A ROMANCE,

IN FOUR VOLUMES,

BY

EDWARD MONTAGUE ESQ.

Author of Legends of a Nunnery, the Castle of Berry Pomeroy, &c. &c. &c.

Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd?
Bring'st with thee airs from Heaven, or blasts from Hell?
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee.

SHAKESPEARE.

VOLUME THE [illegible]. IV.

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THE

DEMON OF SICILY.

CHAP. XV.

The morning sunbeams now began to disperse the misty nocturnal vapours, when Ferdinando concluded his narrative, and their mutual safety rendered it necessary that they should separate. Ferdinando promised to be with Agatha the next night, and then tenderly embracing her, withdrew.

That day beheld the remains of Marianne again consigned to the silent abode

of death. The emotions of Agatha, though great and terrible, were not so poignant as what she had felt on a former occasion. She was at last secure from all fears of discovery; but that security, how dearly was it purchased; with the life of an innocent, unoffending fellow-creature.

According to his promise, Ferdinando met her again that night; and in order that they might pass the hours with more comfort than the gloomy chapel afforded, she led him to her apartment; which, from its being at some distance from those belonging to the nuns, was attended with little more danger than their meeting in the chapel.

This, then, was the night when the Padre Bernardo first beheld the handsome

some Agatha, whose beauties, tho' they raised the turbulent agitations which had so long slept in his bosom, yet could not drive away the love-formed image of the Signora whom he had seen in the pavilion.

With the method he made use of to separate the pair when he saw them embracing each other, the reader is already informed; and also of the promise given by Agatha to meet him the next night in the cemetery of the convent.

At that moment she reflected not on the spot fixed for their meeting, being much terrified by the cloud-formed appearance of the abbess, raised by the Demon purposely to separate them. It was, however, now too late to alter it; and she was too fearful of offending the monk to break her promise. Although she had seemingly acquiesced with the

monk's desire that she should not see Ferdinando any more, yet secretly she determined to admit him as often as she could with safety, till the festival, when she hoped to be able to effect her escape.

Can the feelings of Agatha be described when holding a lamp in her trembling hand she entered at the solitary hour of midnight the dreary abode of the dead, where lay the mortal remains of the murdered Marianne! that restless monitor which reigns in the bosom of the guilty—a self accusing conscience, harrowed up every other sensation of her breast, save fear and remorse for her deeds of darkness.

The hollow echoes of her paces as she trod the vaulted cemetery made her stop; resting against one of the rude columns

that

that supported the roof, she awaited the arrival of the monk.

Her eyes wandered round the place, whose cheerless gloom struck with melancholy on her soul, while in the dark masses of impenetrable shade her fear-struck to gaze would oft depict some soul-appaling form.

A deep sigh apparently from that part of the cemetry where Marianne was buried now made Agatha start with the most horrible imaginings. Shuddering with fear, she bent forward to survey the place, expecting every moment to see the pale form of the nun striking through the gloom.

Dreadful were her sensations, and unknowingly she uttered aloud the thoughts that arose in her perturbed bosom:

"Sure my senses did not deceive me;

for it must have been a sound from a human being which now assailed my ears. Will not the grave contain thee, Marianne? wilt thou again revisit the earth? has the supernatural being deceived me? or is it thy spirit, which, hovering over thy cold remains, sighs to reanimate them again?"

A low hollow groan was heard; it appeared to proceed from mental, rather than corporeal agony. Cold drops of water stood trembling on the forehead of Agatha; the lamp dropped from her nerveless hand, and the light was extinguished by the fall. Opaque shades enveloped her; and now the long hour of midnight was told in harsh sullen notes by the abbey clock.

When Echo with her reponsive train had resigned her short-lived reign to the

mystic dominion of Silence, Agatha heard these words :—

"The murderess of Marianne is discovered."

A light now gleamed from the remote extremity of the cemetery; and as Agatha was sinking on the earth, her eyes glanced on the figure of the monk. "Save, oh! save me!" she exclaimed; "the spirit of Marianne is coming to punish me for having murdered her."

Bernardo hastened toward her; and supporting her in his arms, endeavoured to recal her fleeting senses. Somewhat comforted by his presence, she slowly revived, while the monk frequently kissed her pallid lips.

Greatly did the Demon rejoice at this scene. Invisible to mortal sight, he reared his dark form before them, and view-

ed the effect of his arts, which gratified his restless, malicious, and revengeful spirit.

The embraces of the monk and the nun continued. Seated on the steps that led down from the chapel into the cemetery, they kissed each other with increasing fervor, when a distant pace was heard in the cemetery, and the eyes of the guilty pair were instantly directed to where the sounds proceeded.

At length the object that had caused their fears came in sight. It was a nun; and Agatha soon recognized in the wan features the sorrowing Claudina, who had that night descended to the grave of her friend to lament over her cold remains, and had thus from her own mouth discovered the murderess of Marianne.

Unable longer to survey the guilty

acts of Agatha, and fearing worse scenes, she left the grave of her lost friend, and was going to depart the cemetery in order to acquaint the abbess with the transactions of that night; but ere she ascended the steps, standing before their abashed sight she thus addressed them:

"Foul votaries of vice! at length Providence has ordained that ye should be discovered, and receive the just rewards of your horrible deeds of guilt. This night, Agatha, shall the abbess know the vile cause of the death of the sainted Marianne, and the profanation of these sacred walls by your shameful conduct with a monk."

This said, she was departing on her terrible mission, when Bernardo starting up, seized her by the arm, and dragged her back.

"You go not," said he, "to bear such a message to the abbess; 'twas well you told us your intents."

"Unhand me, father," said Claudina, "or my screams shall disturb the inhabitants of the convent."

The cowl that covered the face of Bernardo falling back discovered his features; pale with fear, and distorted by rage, he looked stedfastly at the nun, while in a hollow voice he thus spoke:

"Swear," said he, "that you will never reveal to mortal the occurrences of this night, or else dread my terrible purposes."

"I fear not thy threats, father; nor will I yield to thy request," replied the resolute Claudina. "I am resolved to unveil the sinful transactions which this night has witnessed."

Hardly

Hardly had these words escaped her, when the monk instantly seized her by the throat, and dashed her on the earth. The unfortunate nun struggled hard to release herself from his firm grasp, but in vain. She lay beneath his strong hold gasping for breath, while her quivering limbs shewed the agony she endured.

Agatha turned with horror from the terrible sight, and hiding her face with her hands, awaited the result.

The efforts of Claudina now became every moment more faint, and at length the breath of life ceased to animate her form, and her soul flew to meet the kindred spirit of Marianne in realms of peace and joy.

The monk started with horror from the body, and as he lifted up his eyes beheld the gigantic figure of the De-

mon, who now rendered himself visible, gazing with looks of satisfaction on the murdered corse.

"Fear not, Bernaldo," said his harsh voice, "thou seest me here. My friend, this deed, which necessity alone prompted thee to do, must be concealed from the world. Lay the body on the grave of Marianne. The well-known attachment Claudina had for that nun will account for her being there, and her decease will be ascribed to her continual grief. To-morrow at midnight thou mayest again expect to see me."

As these words proceeded from him the abbey clock told the commencement of another day. The figure of the Demon then dissolved from the view, and the earth no longer supported his blasted form. Deep in the bowels of chaos was

his

his dread abode, where he reigned the supreme monarch over myriads of wicked spirits excelled only by himself.

The monk, following the counsel of the Demon, took the yet warm body of Claudina in his arms, and carried it to the hillock which rose over the mouldering remains of Marianne, on which having laid it, he retired, deeply struck with pale horror at the dreadful crime he had committed.

Agatha remained on the steps. The last gasps of the nun, the appearance of the dark form of the Demon, and her own sensations, had nearly hurled reason from her seat; and but that the words of the arch fiend consoled her in some degree, it is probable that the fever of delirium would have raged in her frame.

When the monk returned from the

grave

grave of Marianne he took the passive hand of Agatha in his: both trembled, their eyes met; not as before, sparkling with sensations of pleasure, but languid and full of horror.

"We are safe," said the monk, in a low tremulous tone, "Death has sealed up those lips which would have betrayed us; that mysterious supernatural being is our friend; give not way, then, to useless terrors, sweet Agatha."

"Both our victims are indeed silent," said the ruminating nun. "How horrible was their deaths. Would that memory was no more; for the recollection makes my soul tremble."

The monk started while he recalled to his mind the various circumstances respecting Marianne. She too, thought he, has the dread weight of blood upon her;

her; but what could cause her to perpetrate that dark deed?

For a while he too was lost in thought. Suddenly, however, pale fears visited his breast. "Let us haste from this place," said he, "for the spirits of the murdered are now, perhaps, hovering round us."

He then assisted Agatha to arise, and supported her to the steps of the altar, where she seated herself; but the Almighty, who from his throne beheld the deeds of the monk, expressed his anger in loud and awful peals of thunder, which shook the deep foundations of the consecrated pile; blue lightnings played around them, the stormy hail dashed against the casements of the chapel, the spirits of the tempest shrieked aloud, the gale roared between the echoing bursts of thunder.

The monk started with affright at the clemental war; aghast he surveyed the blazes of vivid fire which illumined the chapel; thickly clustered the clouds in all their dark and gloomy horror, the magazines of Heaven's loud warfare.

The senses of Agatha, unable to bear up against the various horrors that lived unceasing in her remembrance, now deserted her, and she lay motionless and inanimate on the steps of the altar.

The monk's terrors were too great to permit him to afford her any assistance; he shook as the lonely thistle on the ruined tower to the restless gale of night.

Then it was that the murdered form of the nun appeared to his imagination. Slow and airy she seemed to glide past him; her eyes were fixed, no motion was in her distorted countenance.

Such

Such was the fear-formed idea of his guilty soul, as he stood beneath one of the chapel casements, overwhelmed with horror and dismay.

Thus wore heavily the fearful lengthening hours of that dreadful night. Agatha at length revived; and as soon as she was able, sadly and slowly retired to her chamber; and the monk returned to the cemetery, which he hastily passed through, hardly daring to raise his eyes, lest he should see the breathless body of Claudina.

The absence of that unfortunate nun was taken notice of by the abbess at the matin service, and one of the sisters was sent to her chamber. It appeared, however, that she had not slept there; and search being made in the cemetery, her remains were discovered. Great was the

con-

confusion caused in the convent by her death. From the torn garments of Claudina, the marks of violence about her throat, and other circumstances, it appeared that some foul means had been made use of toward her. The singular circumstances respecting the death of Marianne, were now recollected afresh, and the abbess began to have thoughts arise in her breast that those nuns came unfairly by their death. On this subject she held a long conversation with the abbot; and as the suspicions of the abbess could not attach themselves to any particular person, the abbot advised her not to make any inquiry at the present moment, but to wait till time or accident should unfold the perpetrators of the horrid act; and in the meantime to appear to think that in despair for the

the loss of her friend, Claudina laid violent hands on herself.

Her remains were buried by the side of Marianne, and the Padre Bernardo and Agatha consoled themselves with the hopes that their deeds of darkness would never be unveiled to mortal sight.

The monk, on the succeeding night after the murder of Claudina did not forget the promise of the Demon to see him. The purport of his coming he was not able to conceive; and his curiosity being roused, he awaited with impatience the silent hour of midnight.

At length it came with all its attendant shades of murky darkness. The waning moon no longer illumined the hours of night; the stars too were hid by the collected nocturnal vapours; the comfortless blast of the east howled

cheer-

chearless among the shady tenants of the forest; the bird of night from the time-worn turret or hollow of the knotted oak gave its discordant hootings to the ready echoes; no nightingale with her song of peace and love was heard; but Nature was wrapt in gloomy horror, while the lightning darted from the low-hung clouds, and the distant rolling thunder was at times heard.

The Demon was now visible to the monk. The sable monastic habit which he had formerly worn when he had appeared to him was laid aside; his form, moulded by the Divinity, was such as far excelled worldly perfection. Wings of the whiteness of the wave-washed swan shaded his lineaments. To have beheld him without the searching eye of the physiognomist, one would have conceived

ceived him a messenger from Heaven; but his features were marked with all the raging passions which war in the bosoms of the wicked; such as revenge, malice, pale ire, envy, and despair; and which bespoke him the prince of infernal horrors.

The monk gazed on him with astonishment; he felt awe-struck in his presence. How different would have been his sensations had virtue been his constant guide, how different would have been the conduct of the Demon had he been standing before a steady adherent to the rule of right. With servile adulation he would have bent before him; but now that that he beheld a being whose soul owned him for his master, and which he looked on as almost irrecoverably his own, his countenance betrayed

the secret satisfaction which dwelt in his heart, while he gazed on the victim of his deep and well-concerted plans.

"Padre," said the Demon, "have the charms of Agatha obliterated from thy mind the lovely Signora whom I showed to thee in the pavilion? wilt thou then tamely resign her to the lover whom thou sawest with her? and hast thou forgotten that I promised her to thy power? Thou seest how prompt I am to serve thee, and how, in the exigency of thy distress the past night, I counselled thee how to proceed. Look on me as thy trusty friend, and banish from thy mind all vain fears which prevent thy thoughts from rolling in their accustomed channel."

"Since the moment that unwilling I was taken from her presence," replied

the

the monk, "my whole soul has been wrapt up in the remembrance of her charms. Sleeping or waking my imagination has dwelt unceasing on her. Me resign her to the arms of her lover? Perish the thought. Be thou my friend, he not long shall be an obstacle to my wishes. When I think on her, I feel my nature changed; to possess her unrivalled beauties, methinks I could dare all perils, encounter all toils, so that she was to be my sweet, luxurious reward."

"Enough," said the Demon, drawing from beneath his plumy wing a scroll; "if such be thy resolve, thou wilt enroll thyself amongst these, my friends, whom I serve. That done, thou shalt find thyself in her presence, thou shalt be alone with her in the silent retirement of her chamber of repose."

Tired with the longings of his bosom, the monk hesitated not to comply with the request of the Demon; who, unfolding the fatal scroll, and taking thence a pen of bright steel, touched the swelling veins of the monk, when the obedient blood started into it; he then presented it to the monk, whose hand, notwithstanding the lovely prize that was to be the reward of concession, trembled with the emotions of a sudden inborn dread.

The storm had increased; the thunder rolled over the monastery; the flashes of electric matter that were lodged in the dark caverns of the low-hung clouds darted frequent around; and as the monk received the pen from the hand of the Demon, attracted by the polished metal the lightning struck it from his hold,

and

and by the sudden shock his arm hung nerveless by his side. The monk nearly insensible fell back in his seat, the Demon looked aghast; suddenly he snatched up the scroll and the pen, and with confusion and disappointment legible in his features, dissolved from the view of Bernardo, who remained in his recumbent posture for a long time, till his corporeal powers returning, he raised himself up, and paced his chamber, a prey to a dreadful chaos of half-formed ideas.

CHAP. XVI.

THE Conte Angelo now determined no longer to wait for the accomplishment of his designs against Angelina. Struck with the manly graces of Lorenzo, and recollecting at the same time his visits to his beauteous ward when she resided at the convent, he easily conceived that she looked on him with a favorable eye. A thought occurred to him of the means which he now possessed to frighten her into compliance with his wishes, and he hastily left his chamber to consult with the friar Hildargo on the subject.

It was near midnight when the plot-

ing,

ing, restless Conte appeared at the side of the confessor's couch, and communicated to him his resolutions. Hildargo then arose; and the Conte having summoned two chosen domestics to attend him, passed on to Angelina's chamber.

He found her sitting pensively by the side of a table, on which lay the volume she had been perusing; she started on seeing him enter, and arose from her seat.

"Your domestic, Signora," said he in a well-feigned tone of respect, "informed me you were unwell. My solicitude to hear of your recovery will, I trust, excuse the lateness of this visit."

"Most certainly, my Lord," replied Angelina, endeavouring to compose the agitations of her bosom, "I feel myself better now than in the morning."

" Can you account for your sudden indisposition?" said the Conte, looking at her with a scrutinizing glance; " was it occasioned by any unpleasant intelligence; or merely the effect of some sudden discomposure of the frame? for if I rightly recollect me, you were perfectly well last night."

Angelina was somewhat confused by this unexpected question. In the looks of the Conte she read that some dark and deep designs were lurking in his breast. She hesitated to answer; and the Conte passionately proceeded:

" Yes, Signora, I know the cause; it was the situation of Lorenzo de Montalto, your favored lover, who now inhabits a prison chamber beneath the east ramparts."

Angelina trembled; the next words

she expected to hear the Conte utter was to upbraid her with her endeavour to free Lorenzo from his bonds, and she remained still silent.

" Your silence, Signora, confirms all my suspicions; and ere another hour has passed Lorenzo ceases to exist."

All the tender, grateful recollections of that Signor crowded to the heart of Angelina, the blood forsook her cheeks, a trembling seized her frame, and but for the support of Angelo she would have sunk on the floor. It was, however, not a moment to yield to the impulse of her distressed feelings; she endeavoured to collect all her fortitude, and disengaging herself from the arm of the Conte, thus addressed him:

" And what, my Lord, has been the crime of the Signor Lorenzo, that you

entertain against him such a deadly design?"

"In brief, Angelina," replied the Conte, "I will answer your question. Did he not attack me? and shall that be unrevenged? Shall I too forget that you look on him with the eye of affection? and did I not find him concealed in the Castello? into which you doubtless had given him the means of effecting his entrance for purposes I blush to think of."

"Me, my Lord," said Angelina, rouzed by the base insinuations of her persecutor, "me connive at the Signor's entrance, Conte Angelo? You either forget yourself, or forget that you are addressing the daughter of the Marchese de Carlentini and the virtuous Louisa."

The Conte smiled contemptuously. "Virtues, Signora, do not descend in

lineal succession; but I am willing to forget your imprudent conduct with Lorenzo, and even to save his forfeit life, on one condition."

" Name it," said Angelina in a faltering voice.

" Consent to bestow on me your hand, and the moment that sees us united breaks the chains of Lorenzo."

" No, my Lord," replied the hapless maid in a firm voice, " never shall Angelina be united to Conte Angelo. You dare not touch the life of Lorenzo without hazarding your own."

" Dare not!" vociferated the Conte, " this moment shall show you what I dare do."

This said, he stamped his foot, and the door of the chamber was opened by his trusty domestics.

" Now, lady, take your choice; either come quietly to the chapel, or my people shall bear you thither."

In the determined looks of the Conte Angelina saw her fate, yet she still thought that the life of Lorenzo was not dependent on her acquiescence; for desperate as the Conte was, yet such an act would be revenged by the state, and she resolutely determined to resist his present attempts.

" Have you so soon, my Lord," she replied, " forgot the solemn oath which you took at the altar of the convent chapel, that you would cease your unjust persecutions? Reflect on the dreadful consequences of breaking that solemn promise, and leave my chamber."

" Idle talk," exclaimed the Conte; " 'tis true I said a few unmeaning words

to quiet the old abbess, but they are now erased from my remembrance, and this hour shall be propitious to my wishes."

So saying he advanced to Angelina, and seizing her hand, drew her toward the portal.

She endeavoured to resist his efforts, but in vain.

"Stephano," said the Conte, "conduct the Signora to the chapel."

"Oh! Heaven have mercy on me!" said the hapless maid, as falling on her knees she raised her clasped hands toward the abode of the all-seeing Creator of the Universe, "look down on me, I beseech you, and guard me in the moment of horror."

The ruffian grasp of Stephano raising her from the floor interrupted her prayer, he quickly bore her from the chamber,

and followed the Conte Angelo toward the chapel.

The tear, the exclamations of Angelina were of no avail; the inhabitants of the Castello were buried in sleep; but even had they been roused by her cries, it would have been of little avail, as the Conte's power was absolute, and no one dared to dispute his will.

The portals of the chapel were open, and a light at the altar attracted the tearful gaze of Angelina, when standing by it, ready to perform the detested ceremony, stood the gloomy figure of Hildargo.

Stephano now released his hapless burthen from his strong hold; and the Conte starting forward took her arm, and dragged her up the steps that lead to the altar,

altar, and desired the confessor to begin the ceremony.

"Oh! father," said Angelina, "do not, I conjure you by Him who died for us, do not commit so great a sin."

"Lady," said the hypocritical monk, "you see I am not allowed to act according to my own wishes; the Conte will be obeyed."

Hope fled the bosom of Angelina, with hope also fled her senses; and pale as the lily which sweetens the zephyr that glides along the vale, she fell lifeless on the steps of the altar.

The Conte raised her up; and while he long endeavoured to call back the breath of life we will return to Lorenzo, who was confined to a dreary dungeon, which he paced with a disordered step while he reflected that the treasure of

his soul, his adored Angelina, was now without a friend to protect her against the schemes of her bitter enemy.

Amid such distracting ruminations as his fears produced, the hours rolled heavily on; the ruddy streaks of morn now tinted the casements of the Castello, and Lorenzo from the grate of his prison examined the objects before him.

A court yard of some extent appeared to his view, surrounded with the different buildings that belonged to the edifice: on one side was a large gallery, which served as a communication from the ramparts to a structure of some extent, which from its appearance, Lorenzo concluded was the chapel of the Castello.

A noise at the door of his dungeon made him turn round; it was occasioned

by the entrance of a man with some provisions. He silently placed them on a table, while at the door stood an armed guard leaning on his battle-spear.

He surveyed the men in gloomy silence, while they appeared awed by his fierce undaunted looks, and hastened from his presence. The paces of a centinal before the door of the dungeon now broke on the silence which before was undisturbed. From this circumstance the fears of the Conte lest he should escape were evident, and Lorenzo passed some time in melancholy anticipations of what would be the result of Angelo's designs respecting him.

At length the mists of evening entering the grate of his dungeon slowly began to shade the objects it contained from his view, and as the gloom deep-

ened

ened around him, so sadly increased the gloomy thoughts of Lorenzo.

Thus rolled away the time; and now midnight lowered heavily in all its dark horrors over the earth, when Lorenzo, as he sat at the grate of his dungeon, beheld a light flash on the casement of the chapel; and looking through them, saw a monk approaching the altar, on which he placed a lamp.

Supposing that an act of devotion had drawn the father there at that silent hour, he again returned to the train of hapless thoughts which filled his soul; when soon after, by the light of a torch which glared at the further end of the chapel, he saw the Conte Angelo enter with two domestics, one of whom carried a female.

Her cries and lamentations shook him

with

with horror, for he recognized in her the beloved of his bosom, his adored Angelina.

His disturbed eye-balls glared unceasingly on the objects that harrowed up his other senses; he saw her placed at the altar, and the detested Conte seize her hand. The priest then opened his missal, when Angelina sunk on the marble steps of the altar.

Loudly he raised his voice. "Fiend of hell!" he exclaimed, "may curses eternal wither thy soul! Execrable monster, would I had thee in my hold, the world should not long contain so great a villain."

But his words became indistinct ere they reached the ears of the Conte or his domestics, who were busily employ-

ed

ed in endeavouring to recal Angelina to life.

It was at this moment that Carlo, faithful to the promise he made to the Signora Angelina, silently unbarred the door of the dungeon; and entering, beheld the distracted Lorenzo raving with the horrific pangs of despair and fury which raged in his bosom.

Carlo, ignorant of the cause of his sorrows, unseen approached him. "Signor," said he, "the door of your prison is open."

As the lightning from the dark bosom of the clouds, so darted away Lorenzo; having first seized Carlo's sword from the sheath in which it hung by his side, he flew along the passages, and fortune favouring him, at length found out the gallery which led to the chapel.

Carlo,

Carlo, terrified at the wild behaviour of Lorenzo, snatched up his battle-spear and followed his hasty steps, deeply involved in fear and wonder.

Lorenzo at length reached the portals of the chapel; they were closed, but he burst them open, and rushed to the altar.

Angelina had recovered. Hildargo had already begun the ceremony, when Lorenzo deep sheathed his sword in the breast of the fear-struck Conte Angelo.

His blood dyed the marble steps; he fell; Angelina clung to the altar, horror struck; for as Lorenzo was hastening to her the sword of Stephano revenged the wound he had given his Lord.

He was at the point of repeating it, when Carlo thrust his spear through his body, and there leaving it, snatched up

the fainting Lorenzo in his arms, and bore him from the chapel.

The domestic who remained with Hildargo hastened to the assistance of the Conte, who lay insensible on the steps, still bleeding. Opening his garments, Hildargo bound up the gaping wound, and without paying any attention to the distracted Angelina, was conveying him to his apartment, when she, beholding the ghastly corpse of Stephano, who lay at her feet with the spear deep planted in his body, exerted all her powers, and tremblingly tottered out of the chapel; and fortunately being observed by Annetta, who was returning to acquaint her with the escape of Lorenzo, she hastened forward, and caught her as she was sinking on the earth.

With some difficulty Annetta conducted

ducted her to her chamber, for the senses of her beloved mistress were disturbed, and she raved continually about Lorenzo; and frequently struggled to disengage herself from the supporting arms of her faithful domestic.

Meantime the honest Carlo, faithful to his trust, bore along the wounded Lorenzo; he left the Castello, and as quickly as he was able conveyed him to the forest, where he laid him down, and procuring assistance from the cabin of a wood-cutter, staunched the blood; while his afflicted patient, anxious only for his adored Angelina, repeatedly entreated Carlo to convey him back to the Castello, that he might be certain of her safety.

"Signor," replied Carlo, "you may make yourself easy. In all probability the Conte Angelo is no more; at any

rate, he is so dreadfully wounded that he cannot now disturb the quiet of the Signora Angelina. Your fate and mine is therefore certain if we are taken, and the Signora will then be left without a friend."

Lorenzo suffered himself at length to be persuaded; and Carlo having procured a mule, he mounted it with his assistance, and attended by him, slowly proceeded to the village, where his attendants were awaiting his coming, greatly distressed at his long absence.

A friar from a neighbouring monastery soon attended him, and having examined the wound, gave him the pleasing intelligence that it was by no means dangerous, and that rest was all that was required to heal it.

But the situation of Conte Angelo was

far

far different. Lorenzo's sword had pierced some of his noble parts, and it was doubtful whether he would ever raise his long-closed eyelids.

A faint pulsation at the heart feebly told that the breath of life yet lingered in his frame; and at length, by the assistance of powerful medicines, a groan announced the increase of animation.

Slowly the Conte opened his eyes; but it was not till near the close of the next day that he could give distinct utterance to his words. His first inquiry was whether Angelina had escaped.

"No, my Lord," replied Hildargo, "she is confined to her couch."

"Where is Lorenzo?" demanded the Conte in a hollow voice.

"Doubtless he is scarcely alive, for he received a terrible wound from Ste-

phano

phano the moment after you fell. Carlo, who it seems had released him from the dungeon where he was confined, carried him out of the hall, and neither of them have since been seen."

The Conte seemed pleased to find that his adversary had not escaped unhurt, and was going to give orders for an armed party to go in search of him and Carlo, when reflecting on the time that had elapsed since they had left the Castello, he desisted, knowing how fruitless it would be.

The hapless Angelina, who feared that Lorenzo had fallen a victim to his exertions in her favor, was inconsolable, her eyes became two constant sluices to the torrent of tears which flowed down her pallid cheeks.

Hope, that sweet soother of the woe-

fraught

fraught mind, did not however quite desert her; and that it was which alone enabled her to exist.

Lorenzo quickly recovered from his wound; he rewarded Carlo far beyond his most sanguine expectations, and took him into his service; and the honest domestic would have been completely happy if Annetta could have shared his good fortune.

Lorenzo was anxious to gain intelligence of his adored Angelina; and having sent for Carlo, requested his advice in what manner he should act; when to his great surprise Carlo offered to be the bearer of a letter to that Signora.

Lorenzo was for a long time deaf to the intreaties of Carlo to allow him to endanger his life; but at length he suffered himself to be persuaded, and

writing

writing a billet to Angelina, delivered it to the care of the adventurous Carlo.

Perhaps it was as much the wish to see Annetta as to be serviceable to his new master that made Carlo resolve to approach the walls of the Castello. Love sees no difficulties, no dangers, it dares hazard every thing to meet the object of its affections.

The mists of evening were whitening around when Carlo departed from the village and shaped his course for the Castello. His features were concealed from observation by a large cloak. He soon entered on the Carlentini estate, where he learnt from the friendly wood-cutter that the Conte Angelo still lingered in an uncertain state, and that fresh medical assistance had been procured.

Carlo knew that at a certain hour when the domestics were engaged at the evening repast his obtaining admission into the Castello would not be attended with much danger; he waited beneath the walls till that time, when he cautiously passed through the gates, and traversing the most retired passages, at length arrived at the portal of Angelina's apartments, where as he listened the voice of Annetta sweetly sounded in his ears as she was talking to her mistress and endeavouring to console her.

He tapped gently at the door, which Annetta soon after opened; and Carlo, letting fall his cloak, became known to the delighted damsel.

"Oh holy Mother! it is Carlo, my dear Carlo, who" ———

"Hush!" said Carlo, "recollect

yourself, or you will cause me to be discovered. First give this letter to your mistress, and then come again to me."

"Annetta flew with the billet to Angelina. Here, my lady, here it is; the Signor has sent Carlo."

"What do you say?" replied Angelina, her countenance one moment bearing a crimson tint, at the next turning to a deadly hue; "Carlo here! and this letter."——

"Is from the Signor Lorenzo," replied the delighted Annetta.

Angelina tearing open the cover, while her hand trembled with the motions of her bosom, read the following lines:—

"The kind Deity who guards the innocent

"nocent has twice blessed me, by put-
"ting it in my power to be of service to
"the truly lovely Angelina de Carlen-
"tini. Condescend to favor me with
"an interview. I may perhaps be of
"use if your enemy yet lives. The
"wound I received in my successful at-
"tempt to prevent the base Angelo
"from carrying his schemes into effect
"has been a great consolation to me;
"for was it not received in the cause of
"beauty and innocence when it trembled
"beneath the grasp of the oppressor?

"LORENZO DE MONTALTO."

Angelina perused the hasty billet of Lorenzo while Annetta was engaged in conversation with Carlo; she blushed at his requesting an interview, but how could she refuse him to whom she was

under so many obligations? who had twice risked his life in her defence? such a thought could not find admittance in her grateful heart; love, too, forbid it; she therefore took her pen and wrote as follows:—

"Signor,

"In order to prove my gratitude, I "will not refuse your request. In the "evening of to-morrow I shall be in a "pavilion at the extremity of the gar- "dens of the Castello.

"ANGELINA DE CARLENTINI."

She now desired Annetta to tell Carlo to enter her apartment; and having learnt from him the particulars of their escape, forced him to accept of a valuable jewel, and giving him the billet

dismissed him, after having once more assured him of her intentions of providing liberally for his future days when time should put her in possession of her estates.

Carlo then departed, and Angelina that night tasted the sweets of repose. In her dreams she saw the gallant Lorenzo; and when she awoke her countenance had lost the gloom which had overcast it, for she anticipated the happiness of seeing him in the evening.

CHAP. XVII.

But the Demon was not to be so easily foiled in his designs respecting the Padre Bernardo. True it was that he was shocked when he beheld the electric spark from Heaven strike the pen from the hands of the monk, and unable to remain in his presence thus defeated, he slunk away to his horrific abode.

The next night, however, he again appeared to the monk, whom he found seated in his cell, perusing the ancient manuscript of Bartolo, of which mention is made in the first volume of these imperfect records. The monk started

at

at beholding him; pale horror was seated on his brow, his mind had been occupied by the pages before him, and some sentences which he had then read struck to his soul. The story he was perusing related to some deeds which had been perpetrated in the walls of the ancient Castello, on whose wide-extending ruins the monastery was erected. The tale was as follows:—

Rodolph and Felippo were brothers. Rodolph was the first-born, and possessed the estates belonging to the Castello; both loved the handsome Laurina; both loved, but Rodolph only was beloved.

In the murky recess of a wood the furious Felippo vented the swelling torments of his soul. "Thus," said he,

"am I doomed to be for ever accursed; the possessions of Rodolph have gained him the love of Laurina; he will marry her, he will possess those charms, and I must behold her his.'

Dark grew his features. "Rather," he exclaimed, "may the rolling waves of the ocean pass over my inanimate corse; rather may mountains overwhelm me; rather may chaos see me banded about for ever in his pregnant abodes of unformed nature where the confused materials of which worlds are formed rage in constant furious warfare, than behold Laurina united to Rodolph."

Settled were his dark resolutions; but first he saw Laurina.

"Lovely fair, listen to my suit; listen to the voice of the enamoured Felippo; 'tis he who truly, sincerely loves you;

your

your frown kills him, your smile would make him the most envied of men."

"Signor Felippo well knows," replied the blue-eyed maid, "that Rodolph has the love of Laurina, Felippo her friendship; nor can Time in all his revolving years alter the firm affection of my heart; thou hast therefore heard for the last time my resolves."

"'Tis well," said the furious Felippo, "Laurina has known how great my love, she has now to experience my hate." This said, brooding dark plans of horrible revenge and cruelty, he strode away.

Laurina shuddered at the black expression of his features. How unlike, thought she, are the dipositions of the two brothers; Rodolph resembles the placid evening of Summer, and Felippo

the stormy nights of gloomy Winter. Strange, that scions from the same branch should be of such opposite natures.

A huge mountain, whose summit in dreadful threatenings far overhangs its base, rises in the Val di Demone. Trees old and horrid thickly beset the ground; lonely is the place, and silent, save when the blast roars through the aged larches and pines, or rustles amongst the tall waving grass which covers its rugged sides. Beneath, a dark chasm yawns dreadful to the sight; the entrance to a cave, the dimensions of which the eyes cannot dicover, for the light of a thousand torches could not extend to the far distant confines. The sun never entered there with his beams,

nor does the pale moon visit it by night; the raging wind glides slow and mournful through the vast regions of night and horror, and frequent bears on its bosom dreadful shrieks and howlings of fearful import.

In the legends of years that are past this cave is mentioned to be the abode of diabolical spirits, who nightly there assemble to forge vain illusions, phantasms, and dreams, with which to mislead unwary mortals. Strange and dreadful are the tales of other days, full of vast and dismal horrors. We doubt not of the truth of them; for what is impossible?

It was to this place that the gloomy Felippo bent his steps. Deeds of horror rolled in his thoughts; he folded his arms, and entered the cave.

He was unobserved by man, for the shepherd never led his flock there, nor the herdsman his hungry oxen; industriously they avoided the place, and even the gale that howled over the gloomy forest, lest it should be infected with the exhalement of evil beings.

The air stilly breathed; no sound was heard through the vast caverns. Felippo gloomily walked forward. Suddenly a rushing blast passed him; it bore along a deep groan, which soon died silently away. Felippo fearful stopped: a sudden trembling seized his joints; low notes of harmony floated above; now they swell sweetly to the ear, echo repeats them; suddenly all is again silent.

Felippo proceeded; the tuneful notes recomposed him, they vibrated gently on his soul.

An enormous bell, as the deep tones which proceeded from it proved it to be, now tolled. Felippo started as echo replied to the brazen sound in harsh, discordant murmurs. Something rustled close by him; he laid his hand on his sword; he drew, and waved it around him. It, however, only cleaved the air; no resistance met its edge; veiled in flaky darkness was all around.

Again the bell tolled. Its sonorous sounds struck coldly on his heart, his knees stiffened, the sword dropped from his hand, erect was the hair on his head, he tried to return, but was not able.

The bell tolled a third time. "He comes!" said a voice, harsh and loud as the roaring of waves in a storm when they beat against the craggy black rocks of Calabria's shores.

In the tenebrous gloom now suddenly appeared before the astonished Felippo a bright form, borne in a luminous cloud. It was the Demon of Sicily. He smiled complacent.

" Brave indeed art thou, mortal," said the Demon, " to penetrate into these, our mundane abodes. Doubtless thy reasons for so doing were of no trifling import: impart them to me; and if I in ought can serve you, depend on my strength and power."

" Great is the grief which disturbs my bosom," replied the trembling Felippo. " I loved Laurina, but she loves Rodolph; she despised my love, and now my breast burns with emotions of deep hatred, and thirsts for revenge."

" Rodolph too smiles in security at *thy sighs*, he rejoices in the grief of thy heart,

heart, and anticipates with pleasure the miseries that will be thine when thou seest Laurina in his arms," returned the crafty Demon.

A volume of distempered ideas rolled dreadful in the mind of Felippo; his countenance grew black as the shades of night, when storms rage and ghosts arise on the earth.

"And does Rodolph smile?" said he, "is Felippo become the sport of others? shall they live? Being of awful horrors, I come to request thy assistance."

"And thou shalt not sue in vain. Yes, thou shalt be revenged. This wand is possessed of great power; wave it over the eyes of whom thou wilt, a slumber deep and silent as the grave will seize the senses; thou mayest then do whatever thou shalt please."

This

This said, the Demon reached to the astonished Felippo a small wand, on which was engraven various talismanic figures; it was of gold, and of exquisite workmanship.

Suddenly all around grew dark; Felippo lifted up his eyes, but the form of the Demon was no longer to be seen. Presently a light arose as if from the earth, at a distance.

"Felippo, that lambent flame will conduct thee thence," said a voice.

Holding the wand he advanced toward it; it receded from him with a gentle motion, and after walking some time, he found himself at the entrance of the cave. The flame disappeared, the breath of morning was fresh on the earth, and Felippo bent his steps to the Castello, revolving in his mind how best he should

be

be revenged of Rodolph and Laurina.

Stormo, the ruthless Stormo, was hired by the gold of Felippo: little reeked he what crime he perpetrated, so long as he reaped a reward for it.

In the dead of the night he conferred with this, his ready agent; in two days the detested marriage was to take place.

A smile distorted the countenances of the consulters as they pitched on a scheme which would plant the sharp and rankling dart of misery deep in the heart of the fond pair.

The morning of the nuptials arrived with all its bright beams. Rodolph led Laurina to the altar; Felippo with composed features beheld the ceremony per-

performed; his revengeful intents appeared not in his countenance.

The feast of mirth and joy made the long tables groan. Sounds of merry import floated in the air; and now the shades of evening descended, and the lamps and torches dispelled the gloom in the lofty hall.

Rodolph looked with the gaze of love on Laurina, who returned his enamoured glances. The fever of rage burnt in the heart of Felippo; sudden he waved the mystic wand.

As when the blast of autumn shakes the leafy tenants of the forest, and scatters their decayed burden to the ground, so fell the eye-lids of the numerous guests; each sunk back in his seat, oppressed with the imposed slumber, and a

sudden

sudden silence reigned around. The minstrel's ready fingers stopped on the vibrating chords, the singer's harmonious cadence died away, the cup that was just lifted to the lips dropped from the inactive hand, and its ruby-coloured contents stained the floor.

Rodolph had sunk back on his superb couch, and Laurina slept with her head reclined on her lovely arm, which rested on the table.

On a signal from Felippo, Stormo entered the hall, and bore away the sleeping Laurina to the place agreed on; he then returned, and Rodolph shared the same fate.

Felippo did not quit his seat; but rejoicing in his well-concerted schemes, closed his eyes, and appeared to be alike in-

influenced by the somniferous deity as the others.

When the shrill harbinger of morn crowed in the castle courts the charm ceased; each of the guests started up, surprised and fearful to be found sleeping on such a festival; each looked surprised at his neighbour, and for some time no words were uttered.

The absence of Rodolph and Laurina was not thought strange, they were supposed to have sought the retirement of the nuptial chamber; but the attendants of Laurina coming to conduct their mistress to her apartments proved their ideas wrong formed.

Felippo with the guests was active in the search; but the objects of their inquiry remained undiscovered. A superstitious

stitious dread, of which the fell contriver seemed greatly to partake, seized the whole assembly, and each returned to his abode with pallid fear depicted on his countenance.

Felippo beheld their departure with delight; and as soon as safely he could, sought for his trusty Stormo to know what he had done with the hapless objects of his deep and deadly wrath. Him he found in the gloomy retirement of a ruined turret chamber, where far from every eye he had taken his secret abode.

When Rodolph awoke from his slumbers he started with horror and amazement; massy fetters encircled his legs and arms, and an iron hoop to which a chain was attached that was fastened to a column, was about his

waist, and prevented his leaving the place. By the light of a lamp that was set on a stone table he saw the form of his Laurina reclining against the wall, bound in a similar manner with himself. She had not yet awoke, but the voice of Rodolph soon made her open her lovely eyes.

She screamed with affright; horror-struck she beheld the fetters. "Good Heavens! what mean these cruel bands of iron? Rodolph! my love, you too there? Ah! what bitter enemy has worked for us this woe?

Sadly ruminating, they passed the melancholy hours. Laurina mentioned her suspicions of Felippo having thus revenged himself for her disregard of his professions of attachment; but the noble-minded Rodolph could not conceive his

his brother guilty of so black an act. "Rather," said he, "expect him to restore us to freedom.

Laurina sighed, for she remembered his dreadful threatenings, and the dark expressions of his features.

The place they were in was a gloomy cavern, far removed from the cheering light of day, and situated in the damp bowels of the earth. It was of great magnitude, and part of the roof was supported by stone columns of rude sculpture. The astonished Rodolph well recollected the immense dungeon; it was beneath the lofty walls of his Castello!

A heavy pace was now heard, and soon the gloomy form of Felippo was seen through the gathered mist. Rodolph

was

was silent; the truth of the surmises of Laurina broke on his tortured soul.

"Now," said he in a voice of thunder, "now, Rodolph, laugh at the miseries of Felippo if thou canst. 'Tis my turn now; and you, Laurina, who treated my love with contempt, you may now sue in vain; look at these walls, they are those of your tomb."

Laurina's senses fled. Rodolph started; horror-struck he looked to Felippo.

"Heap on me thy revenge; but spare, oh! spare that sweet angel of my affections."

Felippo disdained to reply. A smile of exultation gleamed on his features as he regarded his hapless captives.

Soon he strode away; and enjoyed in the silent halls of the Castello his deep and deadly revenge.

Long

Long and mournful were the hours of that day to the tearful Laurina and sadly sighing Rodolph. The next day came, but they were unconscious of its approach, for the beams of the morning reached not their gloomy abode; night, in all her sable horrors, had there taken up her residence.

The calls of nature were unsatisfied; no friendly step approached with life-sustaining food. Laurina sunk beneath the rage of fever; her mouth grew dry and parched; feebly she called on Rodolph, who unceasing gazed on her.

"Rodolph, my beloved, the cruel Felippo will be revenged. I feel the lamp of life expiring. Oh! that I could die in thy arms; 'twould be some consolation."

"My Laurina! soul of my existence

have patience; perhaps he will relent. Even now I think I hear the sound of approaching footsteps. Hark! it is so. Pray Heaven it may the bearer of food."

The paces approached; but the hopes of Rodolph were gone when the feebly gleaming lamp shone on the gloomy Felippo, and the gigantic figure of his attendant Stormo.

He leaned against the nearest column, and beheld the victims of his wrath; he was dumb to the entreaties of Rodolph, and the groans of the dying Laurina were as music to his ears.

Well pleased he retired from the sad scene. Stormo, the savage Stormo, whose bosom never before felt the smallest emotion of pity, was now melted by the dreadful sufferings of Rodolph

and

and his Laurina, and he determined in the dead of the night to release them.

But the piercing eyes of the suspicious Felippo rested not; he watched the countenance of Stormo, he saw there the sensations of his soul, and blackly rolled the current of his thoughts toward him.

Night had now darkly descended from the lofty battlements of Heaven; the rushing blast sighed through the Castello; the roarings of the storm was heard without; the dashing of waters increased; and the lofty trees of the forest waved with the blast.

Stormo took up his lamp, he drew his cloak around it, and descended from the ruined turret. The lightning gleamed

silent and awful; the thunder rolled above.

Stormo crossed the extensive courts and entered the lofty hall of the Castello; he stopped, and uncovering his lamp held it high up, while with a scrutinizing look he examined the dusky interior.

No object met his view. Night and sleep held their silent dominion over the world; he strode forward, and entering a narrow passage, at the extremity raised a trap-door, and descended a flight of steps. They conducted him to a long subterranean passage; the walls were green and mouldered; humid was the air, the lamp burnt with a trembling, uncertain flame. He advanced to a large door, and took down the massy bars, and drawing back the huge bolts, en-

entered a gloomy and extensive dungeon. A lamp at the farther extremity directed his steps, and he soon stood before the astonished and hapless objects of Felippo's cruelty.

"I come," said he, "to restore you to liberty. My soul is shocked at the cruelty of Felippo; I will free you from those weighty chains."

Stormo advanced. A hasty step was heard; Felippo plunged his dagger twice in the bosom of his agent ere he could avoid the death-dealing blow.

"Vile slave," said he, "take the reward of thy villany."

Stormo fell, a torrent of blood rolled out his soul. Laurina shrieked, and unable to hinder the approach of death, hastened by the horrid act of Felippo, resigned her soul with a deep groan.

Rodolph in all the madness of rage strove to disengage himself from his fetters, but in vain; Felippo beheld his fruitless exertions, while a ghastly smile played on his visage.

He dashed himself on the earth, the blood flowed from his lacerated limbs, curses deep and soul-breathed escaped him, still the savage Felippo smiled horribly.

His groans, his exclamations echoed through the subterraneous regions. Felippo started, for he feared lest they should be borne to the ears of the domestics of the Castello, and thereby disclose the true reason of the absence of its lawful master.

It was now midnight; the castle clock in hollow tones had just told that silent hour, which however was disturbed by the

the wild ravings of the miserably dying Rodolph.

Hastily he rushed forward, and the dagger that had terminated the wicked career of Stormo deeply drank a brother's blood. Nature started aghast at the horrid deed; but the Demon stretching on high his gigantic form, stood over the bleeding Rodolph, looking at the convulsed body and the pallid Felippo with savage exultation.

The groans of Rodolph had disturbed the inhabitants of the Castello. Directed by them they entered the dungeon, and witnessed the horrid scene of murder; they rushed on the blood-stained Felippo; for awhile he defended himself with the fatal dagger, but numbers prevailed.

Felippo by the justly incensed laws of his country was doomed to perish by the rack; loaded with chains, he was confined in a loathsome cell, the abode of the toad and poisonous adder, and the next morning was to witness his execution.

Conscience with her sharp sting goaded his bosom. Tearful and melancholy he sat by the stone table, on which was placed a glimmering lamp; he rested his arm on it, and his head was reclined on his hand. The midnight bell had tolled, and the knell of death sounded in his ears; he lifted up his eyes toward Heaven, but he had no friend there to give him consolation; he cast them down again, full of despair.

The Demon stood before him. "Save

me," said Felippo, "save me, and I am thine."

"Swear," said the Demon, "call thy saints to witness thy words, I will then preserve thee from the rack; to-morrow shall not witness thy dissolution."

Felippo swore; he resigned his soul to the service of the Demon. Instantly sharp and excruciating pains seized his body, his soul trembled on his lips; a fiend, commissioned by the Demon, seized it, and in his sharp talons tightly grasped it; and darting through the earth thousands of fathoms, at length hovered over the burning lake, where he released his burthen, which falling plunged deeply into the horrid flood, and then rising, rolled on with the flaming billows, to join myriads of un-

fortunate wretches in the same torturous state.

The lifeless body of Felippo was found the next morning in the dungeon.

Such was the tale which the monk perused in the manuscript of Bartolo. No wonder that he should look pale and confused when the Demon appeared before him, for he thought that in the latter lines he had read his own fate, if fortunately he had not been prevented from signing the scroll.

"Well, Padre," said the Demon, "art thou ready to accompany me to the pavilion?"

Irresolute what to answer, the monk was silent; and the Demon well knowing what he was revolving in his mind,

and

and fearful lest by his refusal some of his dark plans should be frustrated, he thus continued:

"You are irresolute, Bernardo; reflect; my moments are precious, nor will I waste them by endeavouring to minister to the pleasures of those who are undeserving my attentions. The possession of the person of that lovely woman you beheld no longer excites your wishes. Padre, adieu; you leave her then to the embraces of the cavalier."

"No," said the monk starting up; all his passions roused to their full extent by the wily speech of the Demon, and the other sensations excited by the tale of Bartolo lulled to sleep; "no, I never will resign that heavenly maid; never while life glows in my bosom.

Conduct me to her; let me again behold her lovely charms."

Instantly the Demon complied with his request; and darting through the regions of air, hovered over the battlements of a large Castello. The roof divided to let them pass, they entered an elegant apartment, where the Demon thus addressed the monk:

"In the chamber, Padre, to which that opposite portal leads, you will find in the soft embrace of sleep, the lovely woman you adore. I leave you to advantage yourself of the favorable moment. The inhabitants of the Castello dwell in another part; they likewise are resting after the toils of the day. I must go hence on business of moment; but I will be with you ere the bell has tolled the next hour."

This

This said, he darted through the roof of the chamber, which closed after his huge form had passed through; and the monk, whose heart palpitated with the various emotions excited by the speech of the Demon and his present situation, was for a few moments motionless with astonishment. At length he moved toward the portal, which with the greatest caution he gently opened. He stopped for a moment to listen; no sound, however, caught his ear. He advanced: a taper was burning on a marble table which was placed near an elegant couch, the hangings of which were blue satin, richly fringed with gold. Again the monk stopped; a low noise, like some one breathing, now awoke all the turbulent emotions of his breast, and using all his caution lest the beauteous

prize should awake, and escape his fell intentions, he slowly approached the couch, and drew aside the curtains.

But the Deity who guards the innocent was watching the slumbers of the Signora; he saw the monk approach, and hasted to disappoint him in his infernal project.

The monk, when he had drawn aside the curtain, gazed with rapture on the sleeping beauty; her head was reclined on her arm, whose whiteness far exceeded the Parian stone; taper fingers, delicately turned, each joint resembling an opening rose bud, and the nails beautifully tinged with a roseat hue. Part of her glossy tresses had wandered from their confinement, and sported over her bosom, which was exposed to the view of the monk. He watched the gentle

heavings

features alternately; her dark eyebrows and long silken eye-lashes, the glow of health whico dwelt in her cheeks; and her lips, which invited the kiss, contributed to rage the monk to the conpletion of the horrible design for which heavings of her bosom, and her lovely toe Demon had conveyed him there.

He bent forward and inhaled her balmy breath; sweet as the zephyr whdn it pass over beds of eastem roses, impregnated with the fragrence of violet.

In that motion he displaced her missal, which was laying on her pillow; it fell on the floor. Fearfnl lest the noise should awake his intended vietim, he hastily started aside, and replaced curtains; she, however, still slept. After minute's pause the monk again

looked

looked on her. A smile played on her lips, the dimples became visible in her downy cheeks, her dreams were dreams of peace and love, for her bosom was the abode of virtue.

The monk now resolved to make no further delay, and was with that intent approaching the couch, when on a sudden he was struck motionless with horror, for a shadowy form stood between him and the couch, and with an outstretched arm prevented him from coming nearer to it.

It was the venerable form of a nun enveloped in the habiliments of the grave; the countenance was pale and full of horror, the eyes were stedfastly fixed on the monk, who trembling shrunk from its gaze, and slunk into the next apartment; where, unable to stand,

he

he fell into a seat, overwhelmed with the terrors excited by the supernatural appearance.

In this situation he was found by the Demon, who well knowing what had passed spoke not, but silently seizing his arm, bore him back to his cell in the monastery.

The terror of the monk subsided when he found himself far removed from the sepulchral form which had so greatly affrighted him, and the Demon observing it, thus addressed him:—

"I little thought, Padre, that you, who in so many instances have given such ample proofs of a firm and undaunted mind, should fly from a cloud-formed vision at the moment when such a favorable opportunity offered for the accomplishment of your wishes. My time has been thrown away

on one who when the cup of bliss has been held to his lips refused to taste of its delicious contents."

The monk looked abashed at the speech of the Demon; he now, when it was too late, repented of his fears; and had he then been in the apartment of the Signora, no visionary form would have hindered his fell purposes.

The solitary toll of the clock warned the Demon to depart, and like the vapour of night before the beams of the morning, he banished from the view of the monk.

Dissatisfied with himself, the monk for some time continued to pace the limits of his apartment, cursing his fears, that had prevented him from the commission of one of the most horrible crimes that the arch enemy of man delights in exciting mortals to perpetrate.

CHAP. XVIII.

Lorenzo perused with heartfelt delight the billet of his adored Angelina. Carlo was not forgot for the adventurous part he had taken, and the Signor determined that he should attend him the next evening to the place of appointment; for though Conte Angelo was incapable of taking any active steps against him, yet he doubted not but that his emissaries were abroad seeking revenge.

How anxiously did he count the tardy hours; the pale luminary of night beheld him watching the return of the dawn, and the beams of the morning witnessed his impatient gaze: at length they ceased to illumine the horizon, and

Lorenzo,

Lorenzo, attended by Carlo, proceeded swiftly toward the pavilion.

The lovely Angelina was there, awaiting his arrival. The fire of love animated his eyes, as with a rapturous gaze they dwelt on the beauteous form of his adored. A smile dimpled her lovely cheeks as she stretched out her hand to Lorenzo, who kneeling imprinted on its soft surface an ardent kiss.

His words, his looks, bespoke the adoration of his soul; he avowed his love to the blushing Angelina.

" Fair empress of my affections, behold prostrate before the adored idol of his heart the man who to make you happy would think his life but a small sacrifice. On you depends, too lovely Angelina, all my hopes of happiness; deign, oh! beauteous maid, to listen to

my

my protestations of love, lasting as my existence, and pure as the stream that flows from the cleft rock.

With averted face Angelina heard the protestations of Lorenzo. A glow of pleasure darted through her bosom, and her heart beat in responsive unison with the sensations which occupied the breast of her lover.

" Oh! tell me, fair angel," continued Lorenzo, " tell me, I conjure you, if your affections bless some other happy mortal, or if I may hope that my unceasing assiduities may claim some small portion of your regard, would I dared to say love. Angelina, answer, I entreat, a question of so great importance to my happiness, to my existence itself.

" Rise, Signor Lorenzo," replied the blushing maid, " I have already assured

you of the grateful sentiments of my heart; what more could you wish."

"Wish? oh! my Angelina, it is your love for which my soul longs, the possession of which will make me the most blest of men; but without it, where will there be so miserable a wretch as Lorenzo?"

Lorenzo raised his eyes, entreatingly he gazed on Angelina, till the dew of sensibility caused by the emotions of his swelling heart overflowed the brink, and rolled down his cheeks. Unable to view without sensations of deep concern his agitation, Angelina turned aside her face, a sigh escaped her unconsciously, she pressed his hand, the gentle motion thrilled with sensations of exquisite delight through the breast of Lorenzo; quick indeed was the transition from

pain to pleasure, from anxiety to joy. The breadth of the most attenuated thread divides the extremes of lovers' hopes and fears; a single word exalts them to the highest pinnacle of delight, or precipitates them to the deepest abyss of despair.

"When more happy days arrive, Angelina may listen to Lorenzo's protestations; but now, beset by dangers, and surrounded by foes, her bosom is too much agitated to admit any other sensations than such as are necessary to support her during her persecutions."

These words, spoke in a low faltering voice, sounded in the ears of Lorenzo far sweeter than the most ravishing notes of the melting melodist; his eyes beaming with gratitude told the sensations of his breast, while he thus exclaimed:—

"Angelina,

"Angelina, source of my soul's bliss, there is then hopes Angelina, the beauteous Angelina, looks not with the eye of disdain on her adoring Lorenzo. Dear idol of my heart, O! listen now to my vows, nor think of danger; while life flows in my veins, in such a cause I could resist the efforts of the world. Speak, fair enslaver of my affections, wilt thou incline a pitying ear to thy devoted lover?"

"To what purpose," replied the blushing Angelina, "is your present solicitation, knowing that my guardian is the ruthless Conte Angelo? Think you he would countenance your addresses? Oh! no, his dark intents are too obvious. My fortune is his aim, and, unhappily, the will of my parent has placed it too much in his power."

"He

"He dares not withhold it," eagerly replied Lorenzo; "his treatment of you, lovely Angelina would influence the ears of royalty against him; the King would instantly appoint another guardian, more faithful and honorable to the trust reposed in him. Shall I to the court, and state your wrongs?"

"Oh no," returned Angelina; "by so doing the fair fame of a revered parent might be called in question, in choosing a man of Conte Angelo's character for my guardian. The Conte's wound, I am informed, has exhibited some alarming symptoms; should he recover, his behaviour to me may change; and should he fall a victim to his outrageous conduct, I shall be free. A short time will show me what course I ought

to pursue to preserve myself from future persecution."

Such was the resolution of Angelina, and from which Lorenzo found he could not persuade her, so much did she revere the memory of her father, and so unwilling was she that the slightest opprobrium should rest on him for the ill-advised part he had acted in leaving Conte Angelo her guardian.

Lorenzo at length unwillingly forced himself away from the fascinating possessor of his heart, rich in hopes and joyous expectations, for he saw that the ardent declarations of his affection were received with pleasure by the dear object that caused them, and he hoped shortly to be able to do away the many objections that arose in her mind respecting

ing the exposure of the Conte Angelo' conduct.

Angelina, at the urgent request of Lorenzo, had promised to see him again in three days at the same place, when the probable result of the Conte's wound would, in all likelihood, be determined. Sighing the enamoured cavalier left the pavilion, and calling to Carlo, who in the company of Annetta thought the hours as short as his master, returned to his present abode.

Angelina pensively leaning on the arm of Annetta sought her chamber, where she recalled to her mind the love-fraught speeches of Lorenzo; the impressive tone of his voice, and his animated features while he addressed her. Such a recapitulation could not fail of increasing her love for him, and a sigh,

occasioned by her fond and tender recollections, oft escaped her lovely bosom.

The next morning, as soon as she had concluded the simple duties of the toilette, attended by Annetta she descended to the gardens, and scarcely conscious of her actions, seated herself in the pavilion, where the evening before she had met Lorenzo, which place seemed now to possess a secret charm before unknown. The seat which Lorenzo had occupied remained in the same situation as he had left it, and Angelina deeply regretted that his loved form was not now there; even a tear trembled on its lovely brink, and the swelling emotions of her bosom too greatly proved how much she loved.

From these reveries the unwelcome appearance of the confessor Hildargo *advancing* along the avenue that led to

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the pavilion roused Angelina. She feared that he was the bearer of some unwelcome message from the Conte, and the result proved she was not mistaken.

Hildargo with a slow pace entered the pavilion, and having bowed to Angelina, thus addressed her:

"Fair daughter, I have words for your private audience; will it please you to order your attendant to retire?"

Angelina having motioned to Annetta to leave the pavilion, Hildargo continued:

"Conte Angelo's situation is such that 'tis likely the number of his days will be short indeed. He is conscious of his approaching dissolution, and is truly penitent. Deeply does he regret his unprincipled conduct toward you; and much injured as you are, you would in-

deed pity him. He has sent me to implore your forgiveness; which will in a great measure serve to compose his last agonizing moments."

Much as she had cause to detest the memory of the Conte, Angelina could not hear of his present situation without emotion. She no longer remembered his conduct to her, and thought of him only as a fellow-creature whose last moments were tortured with remorse for his deeds of life, and which she fortunately had it in her power to allay the poignancy of. She wept to think of the manner by which he had met the deadly blow of retribution; and as soon as she was able, thus replied to the confessor:

"If my sincere forgiveness and prayers for his soul's happiness can give comfort to the Conte, I beg, father, you will

instantly

instantly assure him of both. Tell him, too, how much, how deeply I regret having in some measure been the cause of his present situation; and assure him too the past will never be thought of by me.

The features of the monk brightened as Angelina spoke these words.

"Those assurances, fair daughter, from your own mouth would calm the anguish of the unhappy Conte. Will you, who seem to possess so good, so tender a heart, condescend to repeat them yourself to him? 'tis his last request."

Angelina could not refuse what in some measure her religion prompted her to do, and she replied:

"If, father, it would indeed make Conte Angelo happy, I would not for a moment hesitate."

"Indeed, daughter, I am so well convinced it would, that to withhold so good and charitable an act would be a sin of no small magnitude. Permit me then to attend you to the Conte's apartment; who perhaps is now accusing me for staying so long from him in his departing hours."

Angelina immediately arose; and anxious to quiet the emotions of the penitent Conte, accompanied Hildargo to the door of his chamber; where the father requested her to wait till he should prepare him for her presence.

Angelina, whose susceptible heart felt the deepest pity for the Conte, now that he was no longer her enemy, felt her emotions increase; when the door of the chamber being opened by Hildargo, who in a low voice desired her to enter, she beheld

beheld the form of the Conte laying on a couch. The chamber was much darkened, and she was some time in it before the surrounding objects became visible. The face of the Conte was pale and wan, and his speech faint and tremulous.

" Much-wronged Angelina," said he, " is it true what the father Hildargo has but now told me? Can you then forgive me; you, whom, alas! I have attempted so greatly to injure?"

" Most sincerely I do," replied Angelina. " Think not, I entreat you, of it; consider only the important business of preparation for an immortal existence; my prayers shall be unceasingly offered up for your soul's repose." Here Angelina's swelling emotions stopped the faculty of speech. The Conte seemed

affected, and was for some moments silent; at length he replied:

"In the opinion of my attendants I am not likely to breathe the breath of life at this hour to-morrow; but my own sensations tell me that the resistless enemy, even at this moment, is laying on me his chilling hand. Yet, though comforted and happy by your forgiveness, still there remains a duty to be performed by me toward you, and which will be some recompense for the sorrows I have made you suffer."

Here the Conte paused, and seemed unable to speak; from the increase of his pains he groaned deeply, and Angelina began to fear that his last moments were indeed come.

Hildargo then administered to him some

some cordial, which appeared to allay the violence of his sufferings; and after waiting some time, he thus continued:

"You know, Angelina, that by the disgraceful conduct of my daughter she has forfeited irrevocably her title to my large estates; and by virtue of the will of my father they will now go out of the family, the Comptessa being dead. This fortune will be yours, if you will only condescend to accept the cold hand of a man who perhaps ere the sun is set will have departed to a better world. To me what once would have been the summit of happiness is now only of importance as it will serve to convince you how much I desire to show my deep repentance, and sincere wish to make you some recompense. As my widow alone can you possess those estates; and when you

consider, Angelina, of the vast means it will afford you of exercising the benevolent principles of your heart, you will not, I am sure, refuse."

Angelina started at the idea of becoming the wife of the Conte, even in his departing moments. She glanced her eyes at the confessor, and saw his deep piercing regards fixed on her with an expression that bespoke anxiety to know her resolves. Some sudden ideas crossed her, and she was on the point of replying, when the Conte said,

"Your silence, Angelina, avows your consent; let then the holy father perform the ceremony, that I may die in peace."

"No my Lord" replied Angelina, "my own possessions are already sufficiently ample; nor will I by a proceeding

ceeding somewhat unjust deprive the next legal inheritor of your estates."

Saying this she again looked at Hildargo, whose eyes were now fixed on the Conte with a meaning which she did not find it difficult to divine. The Conte was silent for a long time; and as she endeavoured to observe his features, she could easily perceive that they were flushed with anger. Her stay in the chamber now became unpleasant, and she arose from her seat.

"And you entirely refuse to grant a request which will so greatly increase your possessions? a request too made in the hour of death?" said the Conte.

"My acquiescence," replied Angelina, "or my refusal cannot be of any import. I am fully satisfied of your desire to make amends for your past conduct.

duct, without desiring such a mark of it. You wished my forgiveness, Conte, you have it in its fullest extent. I shall now, with your permission, retire."

This said, she proceeded to the portal of the chamber, leaving the Conte with his confessor; and as she opened it, she plainly heard an execration pass the lips of Angelo, which immediately disclosed to her the deep scheme that the Conte had planned, in conjunction with Hildargo, to draw her into a marriage. That snare she had, however, happily escaped.

Her conjectures were right; Conte Angelo, finding that he was recovering from his wound, determined to employ the present moment in working on the feelings of Angelina; indulging an hope that, supposing he was dying, she,

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in order to possess his estates, would allow the monk to perform the nuptial ceremony; but he was still doomed to be disappointed in his deep-concerted plans.

Angelina now began to be tormented with her worst fears. She saw too plainly that Angelo was determined either by force or stratagem to carry his designs respecting her into effect; as, however, he seemed incapable of using coercion for the present, she hoped that the kind Providence that had hitherto protected her, would not withdraw his all-powerful aid. On Lorenzo she thought with increasing fondness, and the anticipation of the pleasure of seeing him allayed in a great measure the perturbations of her mind. The whole of the next day passed without her hear-

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ing any further from Conte Angelo; nor did his confidential confessor make his appearance. Foiled in their deep schemes, they were now consulting what other means they should pursue to effect their dark purposes.

The third day now beamed from the heavens, and Angelina hailed its coming with delight, for in the evening she would again see Lorenzo; again see him whose soul adored her, and for whom she cherished a kindred flame.

When the welcome shades of evening descended mistily on the earth, she, with Annetta, who was equally delighted with the idea of again seeing Carlo, proceeded to the pavilion. Lorenzo was already there. What delight beamed in his expressive features as he saw her approach. On his knees he expressed

his

his thanks; and again in that suppliant posture avowed his love.

"The name of Angelina, so dear to me, has been echoed in those solitary haunts so favorable to lovers, which the adjacent forests and deeply seated vallies afford; there unseen have I poured forth the love-fraught sentiments of my soul till my sighs have increased the surrounding zephyrs, and my tears the chrystal stream that murmured at my feet. Oh! Angelina, if haply in your bosom there dwells for your Lorenzo a sentiment beyond pity for my sufferings, bless my ears with the dear confession; but if it is cold and insensate to the voice of love, never more shall Lorenzo again gaze on your heavenly beauties; his eyes shall no more open to the beams of day, his lips no more express the tender sen-

timent of love; his senses will no more exist, and beneath some green hillock his form shall moulder away; but his soul shall hover over the angel it adores, and offer up fervent orisons for her happiness."

Lorenzo stopped; deeply affected he gazed on Angelina. A pearly drop stood trembling in her beauteous eyes, and her speech faltered while she faintly replied:—

"Indulge not such melancholy thoughts, Lorenzo; if Angelina's love is worth your acceptance, 'tis yours; live then for her."

"Delightful ecstatic sounds! Oh! words imparting bliss. Indeed Angelina loves, loves Lorenzo; did she not say so? yes, even now the heavenly tones of her voice vibrate on my soul."

Lorenzo's feelings forbade him the power of further utterance; he embraced the hand which deeply blushing Angelina presented to him; and for some time both were silent, for their sensations cannot be expressed.

At length, however, the wild delirium of joy began to subside, and Lorenzo found utterance for his tender gratitude and vows of lasting attachment. Words which, conveyed to the bosom of Angelina that pleasure which they only can ever form an idea of who truly and sincerely love.

She now informed him of the further attempts of Angelo to obtain her hand, and of her fears respecting him. Lorenzo heard her in silence, while the varying colour of his cheeks betrayed the emotions of his heart.

"And why," lovely Angelina, "why will you not permit me to represent your situation to the King; when at once you will be freed from your present fears? Can any consideration be of sufficient importance to prevent your acquiescence? Only consider, dear possessor of my heart, that in an unguarded moment, when Lorenzo's arm is wanting, you may be made for ever miserable, and me—God of Heaven! what will be my situation?"

"For the present, Lorenzo, there can be no real danger. I will yet wait. From you I shall not withhold the knowledge of his future conduct to me. To-morrow evening I shall again see you."

This said, she smiled on Lorenzo, held out to him her lovely hand, and departed.

Many

Many days now elapsed, during which the fond lovers frequently met in the pavilion; each interview increased their love and mutual confidence. The Conte had not taken further notice of her; but from Annetta she learnt that he was fast recovering, and even well enough to walk about his chamber: This intelligence filled her with sensations of fear; the continued silence he had preserved toward her for so long a time, and the distant behaviour of the confessor Hildargo whenever she accidentally met him, made her conclude that some new dispositions were making, which, when the Conte was well enough would be put in execution; and all her fears were at length confirmed by the following circumstance.

It was Angelina's custom on the an-

niversary

niversary of the death of her beloved parents to pass a great part of that lamented day beside the tomb which inclosed their dear remains; there she invoked the gentle spirits to direct her in the course she ought to pursue through life's toilsome journey, and there she prayed for the repose of their souls.

That day had arrived and Angelina was employed in her devotional duties, when she heard some people enter the chapel; and raising her eyes, beheld the Conte and father Hildargo pacing the centre isle. They were deeply engaged in conversation; and some words which were borne to the ears of Angelina made her anxiously listen to them, for it was concerning her they were talking. By them she could not be discovered, for the tomb she was kneeling at complete-

ly shrouded her from view. As they approached nearer to her, their words became distinct.

"You have already witnessed, father, how cautious she is," said the Conte. "It boots us to be wary. I have even now a thousand fears she will escape before the time that my returning strength will allow me to complete my designs; and if I again confine her, no doubt it will be discovered by Lorenzo. You know, father, should my conduct come to the ears of the Court, we shall be ruined; and even now I tremble lest he should be already there."

"I like not procastination, my Lord," replied the confessor; "why will you wait till the mandate arrives which will take from you the authority of guardian?"

dian? Certain of the present moment, instantly advantage yourself of it."

"In your haste to serve me, my friend," returned the Conte, "you forget the weakness of my frame, and how necessary it is for me to recruit my exhausted strength. I will, however, think of your advice, and perhaps in a few days"——

Here their discourse died away in distance, but Angelina had heard sufficient to apprize her of the dangerous situation she was in. The Conte and Hildargo soon after left the chapel; and Angelina, unable from the distress of her mind to continue the devotional duties of that day, arose from her suppliant posture, and sought the privacy of her apartments.

She

She now saw that to preserve herself she must immediately come to some resolution. She could not think of injuring the memory of her parent by letting the world know how imprudent he had conducted himself in choosing such a guardian for her as Conte Angelo, and she had no other alternative than in confiding her future destiny to Lorenzo. Such a hasty step would, no doubt, meet the censure of the world; but she felt herself more equal to bear that than any reflections on her departed parents. She had, however, by no means formed her resolution, and waited till the evening, when she could consult with Lorenzo.

Won by his ardent protestations, she at length consented to be irrevocably his; and as the festival of the Santa

Catherina were near at hand, it offered a good opportunity for them to travel without danger of discovery, for in the disguise of pilgrims they might safely pursue the road that led to the monastery, where at the altar Angelina's fears, as well as Lorenzo's, would be terminated.

The second night was appointed for the commencement of the journey, and Lorenzo, with Carlo, was to be in waiting at the gate of the gardens which led to the hilly boundaries of the valley. Annetta was to follow the fortunes of her mistress, and as soon as with safety it could be effected, was to become the wife of Carlo.

When Angelina returned to the apartment, and at leisure reflected on the *important* scene that was now before her,

her, she could not help blaming he too hasty promise. Still, however, when she reflected on the crafty and designing Angelo, and that by her marriage with Lorenzo she would not only be out of his power, but also happy with the man she adored, she became more composed, and awaited the hour of her departure with anxious expectation.

Midnight was the time agreed on for Lorenzo to be at the garden gate; and when at length slowly the hour was proclaimed, attended by Annetta she descended from her apartments, and silently crossing the North Hall, entered on the passage which led to the garden. Angelina trembled as Annetta was unbarring the door, and earnestly directed a mental prayer to Heaven to direct her in her actions,

The door being opened Angelina continued for some time close under the walls of the Castello, fearful of being perceived if she passed along the grand avenue; till at length striking into a side path, she reached the gate, where the loved voice of Lorenzo greeted her pleased ears.

He assisted her to mount a mule; Carlo was equally attentive to Annetta; and they were soon ascending the mountain before them. The night was such as favoured their undertaking; the moon lent them her silver beams, and myriads of scintillating stars combined to illumine the hemisphere. Lorenzo, all raptures, could talk of nothing but his love and gratitude, and his tender discourse soothed the anxiety that resided in the bosom of Angelina.

As soon as they had arrived at a convenient spot the whole party alighted, and having arrayed themselves in pilgrims' garments, which Lorenzo had provided, they again set forward; and as soon as they entered on the road that led to the monastic pile dedicated to the Santa Catherina, they mingled in the crowds of devotees who were hastening to the same spot. They now conversed but seldom; and as their hoods concealed their faces, little fear were entertained of the possibility of their being discovered.

At length the venerable and far-extending structure met their view; and as they approached its grey walls Lorenzo's features spoke all the joy that reigned in his heart, while Angelina became somewhat pensive, and often

invoked the Saints to direct her, in what was right. As soon as they arrived, Carlo and Annetta stopped at the porch that led to the chapel, while Lorenzo and Angelina advanced in order to seek a monk to perform the ceremony that would make the lovely maid irrevocably his.

CHAP. XIX.

On the night preceding that on which the Demon had conveyed the monk to the chamber of the lovely female he again appeared to him.

" Bernardo, an opportunity is now on the eve of offering itself for the secure accomplishment of your wishes. In two days the festival of Santa Catherina will arrive. Thou mayest recollect that the lovers in the pavilion named that as the period when they were to be made happy in the possession of each other. In order to avoid suspicion they will be habited as pilgrims. At one hour after vespers be standing beneath the chapel porch; thou wilt behold them approach-

ing, they will request of thee to perform the marriage ceremony; conduct them to a private altar, and seeking a fit opportunity, let the hand of death descend quickly on the Signor; then bear away the lovely female to thy cell."

Here the Demon paused, and the monk, who had listened attentively to his speech, thus gloomily returned:

"Difficult, and almost impossible, will be the performance of what thou hast portioned out to me. Not that I fear to do the deed of death, for my bosom warms with revengeful fury when I recollect the tender kisses he imprinted on the coral lips of the beauteous fair, and I then darkly swore that he should die; nay, I would even then have rushed on him, but was restrained by you. But how shall such a deed be performed with

safety

safety to myself? and how is a female to be confined in my cell without being discovered?"

"I was prepared for thy questions," replied the Demon; "thou knowest that the altar of penance is far remote from observation, being in a retired chamber, the portal of which thou mayest make fast; it is also contiguous to this cell; and thou mayest smile in security with respect to the female, for know that at the extremity of this chamber is a sliding pannel, unknown to any of the present residents of the monastery, that opens to a winding staircase, leading to numerous dungeons and subterranean abodes which belonged to an ancient castello, on the site of whose ruins this pile was raised; there thou mayest secure thy lovely

prize, there reap the reward of thy watchful hours."

The gleaming eyes of the monk well showed the satisfaction that reigned in his soul; a smile sat darkly on his features, while he brooded over anticipated delights; lost in reverie, he heeded not the departure of the Demon, who silently winged his horrific flight to where his restless, infernal projects required his presence.

Bernardo now arose from his seat, and taking up his lamp proceeded to the further extremity of his chamber, in order to find out the sliding pannel mentioned by the Demon. With some difficulty he discovered it, and succeeded in forcing it back, for the grooves were filled with the accumulating dust of years, and for a time

a time resisted his efforts. He now trimmed his lamp, and stepping through, beheld the winding staircase described by the Demon.

He paused ere he attempted to descend, for the dilapidated state of the steps rendered it a matter of difficulty, if not danger. When, however, he called to his recollection the words of the Demon, and reflected that the only hope he had of carrying his designs respecting the lovely Signora was the dark concealment of the dungeon below, he gathered resolution, and cautiously treading on the loose stones, began to wind down the steps.

The remembrance of Bartolo's melancholy tale of the fair Isabella and the savage Leonardi di Vicensio now crowded in his memory, and in imagination he

beheld Ugo de Tracy following the sepulchral form of his beloved Isabella as it glided down the same steps which now tremblingly supported him. At length he reached the bottom of the long winding descent, and found himself in a rocky passage, which led to many dungeons, the doors of which were either just deserting their hinges or laying on the moist earth. Superstitious fears crossed the soul of the monk, he listened to the gale as it sighing poured through the gratings which gave light and air to the dungeons, one of which he entered, but started back, for the objects within forcibly recalled to his mind Bartolo's tale.

In the centre of the dungeon was a hillock of earth, and near it lay a heap of rusty armour covering the moulder-

ing

ing form of a skeleton. The helmet had fallen off, the chapless skull, and the apertures where once glared the revengeful blood-shot eyes of Leonardi di Vicensio opened horribly and ghastly to the view of the pallid monk, who hastily retreated from the spot.

For awhile the terrors of his mind rendered him unable to proceed further than the rock-hewn corridore, and tremblingly he leaned against the rugged wall to support his form; his eyes wandered around, but the light of his lamp threw its faint rays but a short distance from him, and only served to show the black horrors of the place.

At length, however, the monk's sensations of terror became less, and he then proceeded on the object of his search. He entered several subterraneous apart-

ments, but none of them suited his purposes; that indeed which was the tomb of the hapless Isabella and her persecutor appeared to have suffered the least from the ravages of time; the door was yet entire, and the large bolts, though incrusted with rust, promised security, at least from the weak attempts of a female. The moments were now precious, the morning would soon dawn, and it was necessary that whatever was requisite to be done for the accomplishment of Bernardo's dark purposes should not be delayed.

Again he entered with a slow and cautious step the sepulchral vault, and for some time timidly surveyed the heap of rusty armour. At length he gathered courage, and lifted up the pieces, which no longer were united to each other, as

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the leather thongs had for years past been destroyed; he bore them to another cell, and having collected the scattered disjointed bones in the breastplate, he also deposited them there. The object of his terror being thus removed, he next closed the door, and after some difficulty succeeded in making the bolts move.

Bernardo now hastily ascended the steps, for he conjectured that the dawn must be fast approaching, which would bring with it the long-expected festival held in honor of the Santa Catherina, the religious ceremonies of which would render it impossible for him to be absent without the cause of it being minutely inquired into.

Winding up the steps he entered his cell, and looking at the casement, beheld Aurora just beginning to streak the eastern horizon

horizon with a rosete hue, which increased every moment, till at length the glowing regent of day threw his gladsome beams over the face of Nature.

The circumstance of the festival in honor of the Santa Catherina taking place only twice in a century, was sufficient to attract multitudes to her shrine, from motives of curiosity, as well as devotion; as the monastery and convent were richly endowed, no cost was spared in the splendid preparation; and in addition to the usual solemnities, a nun was on that day to make her vows of seclusion, previous to her taking the veil.

At an early hour in the morning, the porches and cloisters of the edifice were thronged with spectators, consisting of the Sicilian nobility, and innumerable

groupes

groupes of pilgrims of both sexes waiting with impatience till the portals of the grand chapel should be thrown open to admit them.

At length the tolling of the bell announced the arrival of the hour on which the ceremonies should commence, and the doors of the church were opened; the spectators soon filled the extensive side-aisles and galleries, the centre aisle being kept free for the procession.

The marble pavement of that aisle was covered with crimson velvet, as was also the balustrades of the galleries, and an altar of massy silver rose at the further extremity of the chapel, on which was to be placed the statue of the Saint.

The procession now entered the chapel, preceded by a group of the most

hand-

handsome youths that could be procured, bearing golden censers, in which burnt the costly odours of the East, whose rich perfume impregnated the air with a delicious fragrance. These boys were cloathed in scarlet robes, confined to the waist by gold bands, they were bare-headed, and wore wreaths of artificial flowers round their hair. Padre Ignazio, the abbot of the monastery, then advanced most sumptuously habited, supported by two friars, bare-headed, and followed by others carrying a crimson cushion on which lay a missal richly adorned with precious stones.

The statue of the Saint, of solid silver, borne by the monks, next entered the chapel. It was adorned with a profusion of the richest jewels; which, as the beams of the sun shone on them, sparkled

sparkled with a dazzling lustre. The Saint was borne under a canopy of azure velvet, fringed with gold, which was carried by a select party of the nuns. The abbess next followed, walking under a canopy similar to that which covered the Saint: trains of the nuns and monks next followed, and these were succeeded by many of the priests and nobility, bearing wax tapers.

As soon as the procession reached the head of the nuns grand altar, they passed through the gilded skreen, the door of which was closed after them, and the abbot with his train of monks at the same time entered the monastery, leaving the altar free to the crowds of pilgrims of both sexes who thronged to pay their adoration to the Saint.

Thus passed the morning hours; and now evening duskly

nuns and the deep base tones of the monks swelled in full and solemn strains.

The spectators were likewise on their knees, scarcely daring to breathe lest they should disturb the soul-awakening harmony which floated on the perfumed air. At length the hymn being flowluded, the assembly arose from their the abbot the abbot from the steps of ed most sumptuous oration in praise of by two friars, bare-headed, second hymn by others carrying a crimson cushi. dewhich lay a missal richly adorned with precious stones.

The statue of the Saint, of solid silver, borne by the monks, next entered the chapel. It was adorned with a profusion of the richest jewels; which, as the beams of the sun shone on them, sparkled

now going to be performed struck with terror to her soul. Encouraged by the presence of Ferdinando, who had taken his station not far from her, she advanced, and kneeling at the altar, repeated in a tremulous voice the vows of seclusion. Her beautiful locks were then submitted to the fatal scissars, and Agatha returned amidst the plaudits and sighs of the assembly.

The abbess at the head of the nuns now passed through the gilded skreen, the door of which was closed after them, and the abbot with his train of monks at the same time entered the monastery, leaving the altar free to the crowds of pilgrims of both sexes who thronged to pay their adoration to the Saint.

Thus passed the morning hours; and now evening duskly lowered on the earth,

earth, the chapel was illuminated with a lustre exceeding that of day's meridian beam. A curtain of crimson purple hung before the skreen, and the monks, with the abbot, again entered the grand aisle.

The shrine of the Saint, and the pillars of marble which rose on each side, appeared as one blaze of light, and suspended to the rafters that supported the lofty roof large silver lamps dispelled the smallest shade of night.

As soon as the abbot and his train had taken their stations, the crimson curtain being raised discovered the abbess seated on a superb throne; at her feet were the elder nuns, surrounding Agatha, who had now thrown off her rich habiliments, and put on the habit of the profession. The rest of the nuns and lay sisters were

ranged

ranged at the right of the abbess, and the boarders, of which there were many belonging to the powerful Sicilian families, were placed on her left.

Again the voice of harmony resounded through the lofty aisles of the chapel, raising the soul to heavenly raptures, while the splendor of the scene around enchanted the eye. At the close of the vesper service the curtain descended, and the chapel was left as before by the monks.

Bernardo had gone through the duties of the day with impatience; for though his eyes were incessantly roving on the beautiful features of the Sicilian women, yet no where did he behold such complete, such irresistible charms as the Signora he had seen in the pavilion possessed.

Often did he, while his quick-beating pulse told the emotions of his bosom, call to mind the promise of the Demon, nor did the idea of the horrid and bloody act he was to perform in the murder of the cavalier serve in the least to deter him from his resolutions.

At the time mentioned by the snareful spirit he took his station in the porch that led to the grand portals of the chapel, having carefully drawn his cowl over his face to prevent his features being seen.

He had not long been there when in an arched recess he beheld two people habited as pilgrims; his heart beat high, and he passed close by the place, when in the silver tones of one of them he recognised the voice of the lovely Signora.

Lorenzo de Montalto, (for he it was

who

who disguised as a pilgrim was proceeding with the lovely Angelina to the chapel of the monastery of Santa Catherina,) now stepped forward, and thus addressed the well-pleased monk:

"Holy father, two persons who sincerely love desire your assistance to unite them in the holy bands of matrimony, for which good office their gratitude shall know no bounds."

"It rejoices me, son," saidly the wily monk, "to see two so well disposed; no douht the immaculate Santa Catherina has influenced your hearts, nor shall I hinder for a moment her will taking place; but tell me, son, in the language of truth, is your situation such as requires privacy, or will ye be united at the grand altar, for to me somewhat of

a desire for concealment appears in your actions."

"Thou hast rightly divined, father," returned Lorenzo, "the lovely maid who is with me is under the guardianship of a man who wishes to force her to marry him for the base purpose of possessing himself of her estates, and though I could by appealing to the King free her from the trammels imposed by her father's will, yet she holds the memory of a parent too dear to let his actions be the subject of censure now that his dwelling is the grave."

"Follow me," said the Padre Bernardo, "his sway shall cease, for the Signora shall soon be beyond his power."

This said, he unlocked a private postern that led into a long and narrow cor-

corridore, whose interior was dimly illumined by a few lamps, placed at unequal distances, continuing along this passage. The monk proceeded till he stopped and listened at a door which was just a-jar, and started back somewhat confused. A groan, and the sound of several blows was heard.

"One of the brethren," said the monk in a low tone, "is now engaged in an act of penance, in which he must not be disturbed; we must wait awhile in this passage; perhaps he will soon depart; meantime, in order to shun observation, we will measure back some of our steps."

This said, he retired into the gloomy corridore, and Lorenzo and Angelina silently followed him. The air of the monk was disturbed; he paced the pas-

sage to and fro with his arms folded, and his head bent toward the ground; he now feared some disappointment would attend his present intents, for unless he could enter the chamber where the altar of penance was, he would not be able to reach his own cell with his lovely prize without hazarding a discovery, as he must then pass through some of the most frequented passages of the building; but in that chamber was a door which led through an unfrequented passage to the portal of his cell, and promised security to his fell designs. Patience was now his only resource, and in indulging the horrible anticipations of his black purposes he passed the present moments.

Lorenzo endeavoured to cheer the timid Angelina with the pleasing voice

of

of love. "In a few moments, dear object of my adoration, will your fond Lorenzo claim you as his wife. Oh! dear word, ecstatic sound, when applied to the sweetest, the fairest of Nature's works."

The closing of a door and a faint sound of footsteps, which soon died away in silence, now made the monk raise his head. "The father is perhaps gone," said he in a low tone; "we may now venture; but be silent for fear of a discovery." This said, he proceeded toward the chamber, and listened some time before he opened the doors. No noise met his attentive ears, he lifted up the latch and looked in; the place was empty; a solitary lamp faintly burnt before an ebon crucifix, the wainscot was of dark oak, and in the large panels were paintings representing the

sufferings of souls in purgatory, and scriptural allusions of a gloomy and terrific nature.

Angelina, struck with the melancholy appearance of the chamber, hung on the arm of Lorenzo, and for a while hesitated to enter it, till cheered by his persuasive language, she slowly advanced to the altar.

The lamp gleamed feebly on the crucifix and a painting of the Virgin weeping over the body of the Saviour of the World, which was hung near the altar, a few paces from which the dusky shades of night rendered every object imperceptible. Angelina looked toward a Gothic casement which was near her, and saw the clouds swiftly sailing on the rough bosom of the nocturnal blast; a few stars were sometimes seen dimly twink-

twinkling through the thin scud, but the waning moon was no longer visible to mortal sight; her monthly course, save a few more hours was concluded.

The monk having admitted his hapless victims, staid a few moments behind to secure the doors from intruders. He had armed his bosom with a ferocity which it was necessary for him to possess to do the damning deed of murder, and in his hand he now grasped the deadly instrument of his designs; his mind, however, in spite of his resolutions, was dreadfully perturbed; he felt as though in some hideous dream, and under the influence of horrible spirits his trembling hands for some time vainly attempted to force the bolt of the portal into the side beam, and while so doing the dagger fell on the floor. Guilt is

ever fearful, and he watched with a scrutinizing glance de Montalto and Angelina, but they were too much occupied by the sweet anticipation of happiness to pay attention to the monk, who hastily picked up the thirsty blade, and with a haggard look advanced to the altar.

His close-drawn cowl, and the melancholy gloom of the chamber, prevented either his features or the agitation of his frame being perceived; but when Angelina saw his tall figure advancing through the dusky shades, an unaccountable apprehension crossed her bosom, and she leaned fearful on Lorenzo, who, throwing his arm round her waist to support her, conjured her not to give way to terrors which perhaps might prevent the performance of the nuptial cere-

ceremony; he then tenderly kissed her downy cheek, where the fading rose was giving place to the usurping lily.

The sight of the lovers, as leaning toward each other they embraced, roused to their highest pitch the fury of the monk; he advanced with a determined step, and as Lorenzo was gently loosing his hold of Angelina, starting forward he plunged his dagger in his side. The violence of the blow threw the unfortunate Lorenzo on the floor, and in falling he struck his head violently against the marble step on which the altar was erected. A groan announced the agnoies he felt, and Lorenzo soon ceased to breathe.

For a few moments horror-struck and motionless Angelina viewed the soul-harrowing scene. Her lover, her Lo-

renzo lay on the floor, drenched in the sanguine stream of life. Her visual orbs were distended, and her hands clasped together. At length a piercing shriek burst from her, and she fell on the lifeless body of the much-loved Lorenzo.

Her situation was favorable to the designs of the monk. Leaving the dagger in Montalto's side, he bore her in his arms to his cell, and having fastened the door, lit his lamp, when opening the sliding pannel, he carried Angelina, who was still insensible, down the steps, and laying her on a rude bench in the dungeon, anxiously waited till the breath of returning life should again animate her beauteous form; intending as soon as she was again sensible, to leave her, in order to dispose of the body of Lorenzo, which he could easily conceal in some of the

subterraneous

subterraneous recesses of the dungeons.

Agatha, when the ceremony of her taking the veil was completed, retired to her cell. An hour after midnight was the time agreed on when Ferdinando would be waiting at the gate of the skreen in order to conduct her through the subterraneous passages that led to the ruined chapel in the forest, where he had provided the dresses of pilgrims, which would secure them from observation. Toward midnight the tapers and lamps were extinguished, and the devotees who still remained were obliged to retire, as the doors of the chapel were then closed; silence again reigned in the dark aisles, which had so lately echoed the hymns and prayers of those who had thronged their now empty spaces.

At length the hour of morning sounded solitary from the topmost turret of the monastic pile; pleasing was the vibration of the sonorous bell-metal to the ears of Agatha, who now arose, and hastened with a palpitating heart to the chapel.

Ferdinando, punctual to his promise, had repaired through the long passage which led from the forest to the monastery. As the door which opened into it grated heavily on its hinges he paused, for a slight sound of a human voice was borne on the air. Attentively he listened, but all was silent; he again pushed back the door, and entered the small chamber, which he crossed, and soon was in the extensive corridore which led to the chapel. A sound of a slow footstep made him hastily throw his cloak over his

lamp,

lamp, while he in vain stretched his eyes to their fullest extent to discover who it could be that at that silent hour had not retired to rest.

The night was dark and stormy, the thunder rolled awful in the heavens, and the clouds shot forth their angry lumens from their sable bosoms, the wind sighed through the embattled turrets of the pile, and murmured in the windings of the corridores; the lightning at times gleamed through the lofty casement that admitted light to the corridore, opposite to which Ferdinando now stood, irresolute whether to proceed or not, for the footsteps appeared to be approaching. A sudden tremor seized his frame as leaning against the wall he beheld slowly gliding past the casement the figure of a man. A low groan harrowed up his

senses, he distinctly could hear the breathings of the form he saw, which to him appeared unlike those of a human being. A rolling peal of thunder which shook the pile to its deep foundations buried all other sounds in its dreadful roaring; a stream of fire burst from the clouds, and the hour of midnight was proclaimed by the long-sounding tolls of the clock of the monastery. Nature seemed full of dreadful wrath, and to rage in fierce elemental warfare.

The thunder continued rolling in stunning peals along the threatening blackned hemisphere; the wind roared mournfully, and with increasing fury; Ferdinando listened intently for the dreadful repetition of the dismal sounds he had heard, whilst the expectation of some terrible phenomenon distended eve-

ry feature in wild affright. At length, however, the continued silence of all else but the storm began to compose his agitation, and he slowly moved along the vaulted corridore.

In his fears of being discovered he had extinguished his lamp, and he now was enveloped in the sable horrors of night, excepting when the lightning momentarily illumined the passage. Accustomed to the place, he however did not experience much difficulty in finding the portals of the chapel, into which he entered.

The long casements on each side of that extensive edifice shewed to Ferdinando the furious conflicts of the elements; the tempest was increasing in its tremendous uproar, and the rain descended in torrents; the reverberating thun-

ders

ders as they rolled gradually away in rumbling vollies stunned his ears; and the vivid flashings of the lightnings oppressed his sight: he now approached the skreen, and there waited with impatience till the first hour of morning should be proclaimed by the hollow bell.

At length it echoed drearily around, and in a few minutes after Agatha entered the chapel. Ferdinando greeted her in the tender terms of affection. "Dear lovely fair," said he, "the hour that gives you to love and liberty is at length arrived; in a short time we shall be far from these hated walls, where reside dark brooding Melancholy and Despair."

Agatha answered not; in her looks was visible the satisfaction she felt, and hastily she unlocked the skreen gate,

and

and in the tender embrace she gave Ferdinando shewed her gratitude for his attempts to emancipate her from the gloom of a cloister.

Hand in hand they now hastened down the aisle, and passing through the chapel portals, entered the extensive corridore. They had not however proceeded more than half way when, amidst the pauses of the storm, a confused noise was heard in the galleries above; Agatha's lamp was instantly extinguished, and tremblingly they stopped to listen. Several footsteps passed along the galleries, and now a light streamed through the square hall at the extremity of the corridore, and the tall figures of some of the monks were observed passing across it.

Alarmed at their dangerous situation Ferdinando retreated with Agatha down

a passage

a passage which they had discovered by the glare of the lights in the vestibule; there they wandered a time, unknowing whither they were going, and suffering the most dreadful fears lest they should be discovered. Stopping at length to listen, they felt comforted, for all was silent around them, and Ferdinando resolved to turn back to the corridore in order to see if the monks had retired to their cells, and if they could with safety leave the monastery.

Hardly had he entered the corridore when an opposite portal opened full upon them, and to their terrified vision appeared the Padre Ignazio, abbot of the monastery, attended by several of the monks, all of whom uttered an exclamation of astonishment, and instantly pursued the Signor Ferdinando,

who fled precipitately with Agatha down the passage.

Fear winged their steps, and they soon were at some distance from their pursuers, when turning round a corner which they perceived as the lights the monks carried flashed on the walls, Ferdinando, who was foremost rushed unknowingly down a flight of steep steps.

His sudden exclamation, and the noise of his body as it bounded down the steps stopped the further progress of the unfortunate Agatha. His groans struck to her soul; but soon her personal safety preceded every other thought, for she now felt herself in the firm grasp of the monks.

Viewing her with silent horror, they brought her down the passage to where the stern Superior was awaiting the ar-

rival

rival of the unknown fugitives. But when in Agatha he beheld the nun who had but a few hours before taken the sollemn and awful oaths of seclusion, his countenance blackened, and he trembled with rage.'

"Who," said he in a voice of thunder, "was thy companion? and, how didst thou contrive to leave the convent? and what were thy intents?"

The horrors of her situation bursting full upon her was more than Agatha could support, and she sunk on the floor for awhile insensible to the dark looks of the revengeful abbot, who ordered her to be taken into one of the adjoining apartments, and then sent some of the monks to seek her companion.

Him they found at the bottom of the stairs in a condition truly dreadful, co-

vered with the blood which flowed from a deep wound in his head; he however still breathed, and when they had brought him up into the passage, the abbot sent for one of the brethren who was skilled in surgery, to endeavour to stop the stream of life which was ebbing fast away, determined to be acquainted with every circumstance relative to this mysterious affair.

Other events of a still more wonderful nature now called him away, and, attended by the monks, whose number had greatly increased, he left the passage.

When Agatha opened her eyes she fixed them on the monks who were standing round the seat on which they had laid her, and her recollection instantly returning, she closed them again in silent horror. Taken in the very act of attempting

tempting her escape, she well knew no mercy would be shown to her, and her punishment could not be less than death. It was now that her frame trembled beneath her mental terrors, while her too busy recollection long dwelt on the murders of the unfortunate Marianne and her friend Claudina.

The bell of the monastery now rung, and the monks starting, soon left the chamber; at the sound of their receding paces Agatha again looked up; a lamp which was placed on a distant table served to shew the gloomy extent of the apartment; and while her eyes wandered around the place, her ears were suddenly assailed by a deep groan of long continuance, which seemed to come from a remote corner of the chamber, where the rays of the lamp were

unable

unable to reach. Fearfully she fixed her eyes on the spot, expecting every moment to see some horrible, soul-appalling form start from the murky gloom.

Another groan and a faint exclamation, seemingly caused by acute pain, made Agatha start from her seat, and drag her feeble limbs to the deep recess; where she beheld stretched on a pallet the pale, blood-stained form of Ferdinando, her lover.

His wounds having been bound up, and the bleeding stopped, he was, though slowly, becoming sensible of the anguish of them; and when his languid eyes rested on Agatha, he attempted to speak, but was not able.

To describe the feelings of either were impossible; they silently gazed on

each

each other, while disappointment and terror were visibly marked in their pale countenances. To escape was impracticable, for Agatha knew not the way to the subterraneous passage; and from Ferdinando she could obtain no information. Cursing her wayward fate in all the bitterness of accumulating grief, she now paced the chamber in a paroxysm of despair; and had the means of self-destruction offered, Agatha would speedily have avoided the pangs she was doomed to suffer.

After a lapse of some time the abbot entered the chamber; his countenance was pale and agitated.

"The holy abbess" said he, addressing himself to the trembling Agatha, "is informed of your horrible acts. Father Nicolo," continued he, addressing one

of

of the monks, "conduct that nun to the parlour of the convent, that the abbess may have her in strict confinement till such time as I may resolve on the steps necessary to be taken in order to serve as a lasting warning, and to deter others from doing the like.

Agatha now threw herself at the feet of the abbot. "Oh! holy father!" said she, while bitter drops of terror rolled down her cheeks, "Oh! holy father! hear me, I beseech you, and have mercy on me. Obliged to enter these walls, and to make solemn promises of leading a secluded life, while my heart was full of worldly love, was too severe a task. Can forced oaths be binding? is a hard consent wrung from us to be treated as the voluntary vows of the heart?"

"Idle talk," replied the abbot, "the common cant of those whose irregular worldly passions predominate over the pious holy comforts of a religious life. Be assured, misguided female, no lenity can be shown to such an horrible offence. What! shall it be said that the convent of Santa Catherina, the sanctity of whose character never till this night of wonderful events was sullied; shall it be said that its members were permitted to exercise all acts of horror and depravity, while its superior withheld the just rod of punishment? No; the terrible officer of the holy Inquisition shall have due notice of your deeds."

This said, the abbot, disdaining further converse, turned aside, and father Nicolo assisted the miserable Agatha to arise, and then silently conducted her to

the parlour of the convent, from whence, by the order of the angry abbess, she was conducted to a dismal, gloomy chamber, far removed from the comforts of light and air, and situated in the damp, unwholesome bowels of the earth. There, with a scanty portion of bread and water, she was left to meditate on all the horrors of her situation, and to anticipate the dreadful conclusion of a life marked with deeds of blackest hue; deeds that permitted not the smallest hope of mercy or forgiveness, either in this world or that which is to come; deeds which no repentance could hardly expiate.

CHAP. XX.

THE monk paced the dungeon with impatience, he often looked on the pallid features of Angelina, her pilgrim's hood was thrown back and discovered her beautiful luxuriant tresses, dark eye-brows, and silken eye-lashes; her cheeks were pale, but still retained a lovely look, and her lips were slightly tinged with a roseate hue.

Bernardo, alarmed at her continued insensibility, raised her up from her recumbent posture, and putting his arm round her waist, laid his hand on her bosom, but not the least palpitation of her heart was perceptible; the grim *king of* terrors seemed to have laid his

icy

icy grasp for ever on the fair Angelina, and thus to have deprived the monk of the accomplishment of his horrific intents.

But a deep, long-drawn, convulsive sigh now announced returning animation in the form of Angelina; her lips trembled as her breath passed them, and the monk inhaled the balmy, fragrant zephyr with sensations of new-born delight, while his arm pressed yet more closely her slender waist.

The name of Lorenzo faintly was uttered by Angelina as slowly she unclosed her eyes, and the memory of the past entered her bosom; but when instead of his loved form she beheld herself in the arms of the murderous monk, she shrieked, and started from him.

The monk saw the wild emotions of

her soul, and endeavoured to calm its perturbations, but in vain; she heard him not.

"Where am I?" she exclaimed. "O God! but now I thought I saw my beloved Lorenzo weltering in his blood, stabbed by thee, accursed monk. Was it but an horrible dream? Tell me quickly, ere my maddening brain bursts with my agonizing apprehensions."

"Love," said the monk, "dares any thing. It was thy beauteous form that made me commit the deed; thee for my bright reward, what dare I not do?"

The horrors of her situation were now unfolded to the hapless maid. "God of mercy!" said she, "is such a wretch permitted to breathe? do I yet exist; or have I passed the gates of life, and am in regions where fiends foul and horrible

take

take their abode? for such a one is doubtless the form before me. Speak, monster, why am I immured in this horrible dungeon?"

"The precious moments," said Bernardo, "suit not with long parley; this however hear, 'tis some time since thy lovely form raised in my breast the unceasing flame of love. To get thee into my power have I committed dark and dreadful crimes; for thee have I bartered the eternal repose of my soul. Lorenzo is no more, and thou art now deeply concealed in the bowels of the earth, placed in my power by the arts of Hell's dreadful ruler. Thy cries and supplications are in vain; thou art far removed from all human aid, and I am protected by a supernatural power.

Give then a loose to love, since it must be so, and no other source is left thee."

Angelina heard his speech, she answered not, her eyes told the wild workings of her bosom, distractedly she fell on her knees, and raising her lovely hands toward Heaven's awful throne, these words proceeded from her parched lips:

" God of all power and might, from whose searching gaze nothing is hid, who can penetrate the secret caves of the earth, and be as conscious of the deeds of horror there committed as if performed on the cloud-capt mountain, look down, I beseech thee, and in thy gracious goodness cut short the thread of my existence rather than let me fall into the power of this monster in human form. Pitying Angels protect me; shield, oh! shield me from this impending ruin."

The monk securely smiled at her ardent entreaties. "Fair maid," said he, "thy Saints hear thee not; the Demon has given thee to me, the pledge of a dreadful contract; dreadful indeed—No matter—away with reflection; the present moment is bliss, let what will come hereafter."

Thus saying, he advanced toward the trembling Angelina, and seizing her by her tender lovely hand, raised her from her suppliant posture, and putting his arms round her slender waist, attempted to kiss her. Angelina screamed unceasingly, and at length forced herself from his hold, and rushed to the furthest extremity of the dungeon.

The monk hastened after her, and again seized her, when the tolling of the abbey clock sounded drearily through

the apertures made in the earth for the admission of air into those subterraneous abodes; and rattling bursts of thunder made him relinquish his hold, struck with sudden affright.

The waning moon had finished her monthly travel, and as the hour of midnight sounded, another supplied her place, but in that dungeon such a change was attended with a scene horrible indeed, such as human orbs had never before witnessed, but which was surmised to be the case, as the reader will find in Bartolo's tale of the fair Isabella de Tracy; and this was the monthly penance which the tortured soul of the savage Leonardi di Vicensio was doomed to suffer at her grave.

A second peal of thunder was heard, and now a third rolled with increasing

fury

fury along the vaulted arch of Heaven. The door of the dungeon was suddenly burst open, and the massy fastenings fell to the ground.

Bernardo stood trembling beside the terrified Angelina, looking with distended eyeballs at the opened portal.

Deep groans were now heard amidst the stunning peals of Heaven's warfare, loud shrieks rent the air, and the earth trembled as the pendent leaf to the autumnal blast.

A glaring light shone through the door-way, a rushing noise was heard in the passage, and presently after a spectre entered the dungeon. Pale and ghastly was the countenance, deep sunk and dreadful was the expression of the eyes as they fixed their horrible gaze on

the rising earth which covered the form of the fair Isabella.

Furies followed the blood-stained form, and loudly exulting, with savage yells they pursued it three times round the grave, torturing the form with scorpion whips that gored the flesh from the sides, leaving the blood clotted ribs visible to the sight.

All this time the thunder roared, the red forked lightnings played around the dungeon, the groans of the tortured soul and the yells of the furies harrowed up the senses of the monk, and he fell lifeless on the earth, as had already done the unfortunate, persecuted Angelina, who now happily was for a time ignorant of the horrors of her situation.

Angelina first returned to her senses; she found herself lying on the damp earth, not far from the motionless body of the monk; the light of the lamp feebly gleaming around shewed her the horrors of the place, and having observed the door, which was thrown widely back, she immediately endeavoured to raise herself from the ground, in the hopes of being able to effect her escape before her persecutor should recover.

Her limbs, enfeebled by the late terrors of her mind, could scarcely bear her tottering form; at length she reached the lamp, and taking it up, left the dungeon.

Scarcely had she turned out of the deep archway in which the door was placed, when the monk groaned; convinced by this that his senses were return-

ing,

ing, she hastened her footsteps, and soon after proceeded along the passage which led to the other dungeons and subterraneous cavities in which the place abounded

The extremity of the passage opened into a large cavern whose rocky roof was supported by rough hewn columns; it was of great extent, for Angelina continued pacing it for some time without being able to discover the opposite side.

Fearful of bewildering herself in the vast cavern, Angelina paused; she looked anxiously at the lamp, the oil of which was nearly exhausted, and began to deliberate on what she should do, when the echoes of hasty footsteps broke unwelcome on the silence of those dreary regions of night and horror, and as she

looked

looked round saw her dreadful enemy the monk approaching her.

In the wild emotions caused by her deep terrors she dropped the lamp and fled; hastily the monk picked it up ere the light was extinguished, and pursued his trembling prey.

As the monk did not dare to exert his speed, lest by so doing he should extinguish the lamp, on which all his hopes of overtaking her rested; it was some time ere he again seized on the unfortunate Angelina.

The cavern re-echoed with her shrieks when she again felt his detested grasp, and saw his dark eyes glaring on her with all the fierceness of determined outrageous intentions.

She now tried to supplicate his mercy, but in vain; her eyes raised on him in

urgent entreaty only fed the furious fires of his bosom, and uttering an oath deep and horrible, the dark purport of which was that nothing should now prevent his horrific intents, he strained the panting form of Angelina still closer to him, and stopped her cries with his detested kisses.

The poor remnant of Angelina's almost exhausted strength could now be but of little avail, and she was on the point of being made for ever miserable in this world, when a sudden glare of torches illumined the extremity of the cavern.

The monk aghast turned round, expecting again to behold the spirit of Leonardi, but instead of it the more unwelcome form of the abbot Ignazio advancing

advancing toward him burst forth on his tortured sight.

Leaving his hold of Angelina, he sought to avoid the monks, who, however, rushing forward, soon detained him, while their averted countenances bespoke how much they abhorred his vile, infernal deeds.

Angelina had sunk on the earth; the sovereign powers of reason had deserted her; she stared wildly around.

"My Lorenzo" said she, with a melancholy smile as she gazed around her, "dear Lorenzo where art thou? Oh I saw the blood flowing from his side; the monk stabbed him, and he fell; his soul has passed the gates of death, and is gone to Heaven: Oh! that mine could accompany it to those glad realms!

Hark!

Hark! what groan was that? See how the dreadful spirit stalks around!"

Here her eyes seemed to pursue some terrible vision of her disordered fancies. The abbot tried to comfort her, but she listened not to his words; her terrors and grief had deprived her of the use of her senses.

The countenance of the Padre Bernardo, thus discovered, and at such a moment, was gloomily dreadful; a thousand times did he shower curses on the Demon who had failed to protect him, while all the horrors of his situation rose in his mind: still however a hope existed that he would yet be his friend; and which in some measure enabled him to support the terrible anticipations of the severe punishment which he knew awaited him.

The

The abbot having directed that the Signora Angelina should be conducted to the chamber belonging to the porteress of the convent for that night, ordered Bernardo to be taken to the dungeon cell, where, chained to the floor, with a scanty truss of straw beneath him, he was left to reflect on the past.

Dreadful indeed and bitter were his reflections; he now saw the snare that had so successfully been laid for him by the eternal enemy of man, and into which he had so completely fallen. How much did he now repent of his too great confidence in his own virtue which had thus thrust him to the very verge of destruction. To supplicate for mercy was impossible; how could he hold up his hands crimsoned with murder toward the throne of the Almighty, withou-

drawing on him the dreadful fury of insulted Heaven? How could he hope that his prayers, made in the moment of danger, and caused only by his fears, could meet with an audience?

All hope, thought he, from Heaven is lost; the murderer's prayers ascend not there, nor is heard the perjured sinner; I have forfeited all hopes of mercy; but still, is not the Demon possessed of power inferior only to the King of Heaven. To him will I look; through his arts I have fell, he may yet protect me.

Mistaken, hapless man, not to know that the angel of mercy is ever ready to recieve the prayers, the vows of the penitent, and gladly to bear them before the radiant throne of Heaven. Plunged deep in guilt, Bernardo rather hastened to the very vortex of destruction than

seek to court the assistance of the friendly plank which would have supported him to the shore.

To his sad reflections we leave him, while we relate to the reader the means which caused the double discovery which had taken place on that night teeming with events in the monastery of the Santa Catherina.

The blow which in falling Lorenzo de Montalto received against the step of the altar, instantly deprived him of his senses, and the blood flowing both from his head and the wound inflicted by the monk, continued for a long period to stagnate the pulse of life. At length, however, he opened his eyes; the lamp which still feebly glimmered before the ebon crucifix enabled him to discover that he was alone; distractedly he groaned.

ed out the name of Angelina, but her sweet voice answered not; again, in somewhat lower tones he repeated her name; echo alone faintly reverberated the sounds. It was then that he reflected on the conduct of the monk; my Angelina, thought he, is now in the power of that fiend of hell, who doubtless is some agent of the Conte Angelo. Oh! Heaven in mercy render me able to pursue the steps of the monster, and rescue my love."

This said, he raised himself, though with much pain and difficulty, on his feet; the dagger of the monk had fortunately glanced against a rib, which averted its progress to the mortal parts; the wound was however large, and the loss of blood considerable, but the situation of Lorenzo's mind, and his fears respecting Angelina, alone rendered

him

him able to exert himself; he hastily endeavoured to stop the stream of life, and though almost fainting, left the altar, and slowly staggered toward the door.

The weak state of his frame rendered him unable for a long time to draw back the bolt, which secured the portal. At length he effected it, and passed into the passage; there he wandered for some time, unknowing whither he was going, for darkness reigned thickly around him.

At length he entered the large corridore that led to the chapel, and aided by the vivid streams of lightning which gleamed through the lofty casements, he directed his feeble steps toward the interior of the monastery.

The anguish of his wounds now

caused

caused those groans and convulsive sighs which were heard by the astonished Ferdinando when he was on his way to meet Agatha. The senses of Lorenzo were affected to such a degree from the violence of the agony he suffered, and the misery he endured respecting Angelina, that he neither saw nor heard that cavalier; but continuing his painful journey, arrived at the summit of the grand staircase which rose from the vestibule at the extremity of the corridore; where, with a deep and hollow groan, he sunk on the floor of the gallery.

Heaven, weary of the scenes of guilt which were passing within the walls of the monastery, had so ordered it, that the groans of Lorenzo reached the ears of one of the fathers, who immediately

came

came out of his apartment to know the cause of them, and discovered the blood-stained form of the unfortunate cavalier.

Happily the monk was skilled in medical knowledge, and instantly, without seeking to know by what extraordinary means the person before him could have obtained entrance into the monastery, he bore him to his chamber, and laying him on his couch, staunched his bleeding wounds.

The moment that the faculty of speech returned to Lorenzo, he disclosed to the father the manner in which he was wounded, and the loss of Angelina, and entreated him immediately to make the superior acquainted with these circumstances, that his adored mistress might be sought for.

Such a tale, which at once so deeply implicated a monk and the high reputation of the monastery, was not to be passed over; and father Nicolo immediately repairing to the apartments of the abbot, related to him the extraordinary occurrence of the night.

The abbot immediately arose, and proceeding to the chamber where Lorenzo lay, questioned him concerning the monk who had endeavoured to assassinate him; but Lorenzo, who had not seen Bernardo's features, was unable to give him the smallest intelligence that could direct his suspicions toward any particular person.

Some of the monks whose chambers were contiguous to those of the superior and father Nicolo, awakened by the *sound of* their paces in the gallery, soon after

after joined them, and the abbot now determined to search the monastery, in order to find if the Signora Angelina was still within its walls, as from her he doubtless should obtain every information he wished. Leaving Lorenzo to pray for their success, the abbot, attended by the astonished father, descended to the vestibule, and attentively examined many of the chambers below, but without meeting the object of their search.

It was while they were thus employed that Agatha and Ferdinando were discovered, as is already related; an event which tended to raise to its highest pitch the anger of the haughty abbot, who foresaw the tottering reputation of the monastery which had been for many years far famed for the sanctity of its

inhabitants. No wonder then that he doomed the pair to destruction. That event, however, did not long impede his search, but no where could he discover the least traces of the objects who caused it.

As there was little doubt that if the Signora had left the convent she would be accompanied by the monk, the abbot ordered the bell to be rung to assemble the community, when he might learn who it was that had been guilty of so outrageous a conduct. Padre Bernardo was alone absent, and a monk was sent to his cell to see if he was there; the father, however, soon returned with the information of the door being fastened, and that he had knocked and called some time without receiving any answer.

The abbot on hearing this immediately deter-

determined to force the door, and approaching it with some of the fathers, after some difficulty made it yield to their united efforts.

The chamber was empty, and they were on the point of quitting it when the open pannel in the wainscoting was discovered; this occasioned a further search, and the abbot instantly passed through the aperture.

Thus it was that the secret entrance to the dungeon was found out; and the abbot, determining to explore their subterranean recesses, whither it was evident the monk had retired, immediately descended the winding steps with the fathers.

When arrived at the bottom, the cries of Angelina were distinctly heard; and guided by them, he came just in time to

rescue her from the black, horrible designs of Bernardo.

Thus did Heaven protect with its all-powerful arm the supplicating Angelina; and weary with the repeated crimes of the monk, Agatha, and Ferdinando, at length caused them to be discovered, at the very moment when they were going to reap the fruits of the deeds of darkness, delivering them to the avenging arm of justice in this world, in order to give a terrible warning to others, and to deter them from following the like iniquitous paths. Heaven is long-suffering, but it will be just, and sooner or later overwhelms the guilty in confusion and horror, while to long-suffering virtue it prepares a bright reward both in this world and in that which is to come.

CHAP. XXI.

THE distracted Agatha remained many hours in her gloomy dungeon, a prey to inexpressible horror, for each moment her disturbed imagination represented to her the wan, flitting shades of Marianne and Claudina stalking before her, while her deeply-accusing conscience tortured her unceasingly with its endless sting. The morning came, but it came not to Agatha, for night held her cheerless dominion in that dungeon.

At length the powers of animation became feeble, and Agatha closed her eyes in a disturbed slumber, from which she was roused by a noise occasioned by the removal of the bolts and chains of the

dungeon door, and to her terrified vision appeared three tall figures, habited in sable flowing garments, with black visors on. One of them bore a torch, which throwing gleams on the hapless nun, discovered to them her pallid features, and her form reclined on a scanty heap of straw. Unable to move, Agatha gazed on their mysterious forms with silent dismay, while a deep voice uttered slowly these words:—

"Agatha, arise; the holy Inquisition hath cognizance of thy offence; its officers await to conduct thee before its great and terrible judges; terrible indeed to thee, who art charged with so much sin."

Such were the dreadful sentences which vibrated with terror on the soul of Agatha. One of the gloomy looking officials

officials now silently advanced, and raised up her trembling and almost lifeless form. Assisted by the others he carried her from the dungeon, and traversing some dark passages, the man who bore the torch unlocked a small postern, and having extinguished it, threw the door open, when Agatha perceived a carriage waiting without, in which she was placed, and the three officials also entering it, they rolled away from the convent of Santa Catherina.

Padre Bernardo was also conducted from the monastery in like manner, and lodged in the silent horrific prisons of the Inquisition; but Ferdinando escaped the hand of worldly justice, for he breathed forth his last sigh ere the morning sun beamed on the hemisphere.

At midnight Agatha was summoned

to attend the Judicial Court; a veil was thrown over her, and in that manner she was hurried along many passages, till at length she was ordered to kneel. The veil was then taken off, and she beheld before her a door. One of the officials having struck it with his staff three times a voice from within demanded "Who is there?"

"A miserable sinner," replied the official, "who comes to make confession of her crimes, and to receive such wholesome punishment for her offences as the holy tribunal shall be pleased to inflict on her, that her soul may be purged from all crimes, and be worthy of Heaven's mercy."

The voice then replied, "Enter; and may the pains here endured be an expiation of all worldly sins."

The portal then opened, and Agatha was raised, from her knees and conducted into a large and gloomy chamber, illumined only by one lamp, which depended from the centre of the vaulted roof over a long table covered with black cloth, at which sat the judges of the Inquisition.

The couductors having placed Agatha at the extremity of the table, after making profound obedience to the inquisitors, retired. A silence for some moments was held, when the supreme inquisitor, looking at Agatha, who trembled beneath his piercing glance, demanded if she knew what crime she was charged with, and which had occasioned her being brought there .

Agatha tremblingly recapitulated the circumstances of her being obliged to enter the convent, and to take the vows

from which her heart revolted; then mentioned her long attachment to the Signor Ferdinando, who had endeavoured to effect her escape, concluding with an earnest supplication to the grand inquisitor for mercy.

"We will be merciful, Agatha, if we find you deserving of it," replied the judge, who bidding a secretary note down the confession of the nun, thus continued: "You have now related the crime for which you suppose you were brought here; now tell me, Agatha, is thy conscience clear of other crimes of a more dark and deadly nature? Answer me as thou hopest for mercy from this tribunal."

The nun trembled. To confess the murder of Marianne would be to involve herself beyond all possibility of hope of being

being forgiven. She turned deadly pale, and hesitated in her answer. The inquisitor noticed it.

"You fear to confess, Agatha; recollect that no mercy will be shown you unless you strictly conform to the mandates of this court. We know full well your guilty deeds, but wish to see if there is yet any hope that our merciful intentions may be of service to your soul."

Still, however, Agatha, was irresolute, she had heard of the insidious wily arts used by the subtle officers of the Inquisition, and was divided in her ideas whether this was merely a scheme to draw from her what more she might have been guilty of, or whether they indeed were informed of the means by which Marianne met her death; yet a moment's re-

flection

flection showed her the improbability of their having obtained such knowledge, and she determined to persist in her innocence of all other crimes; which she in a faltering, tremulous voice declared to the court.

The countenance of the grand inquisitor grew dark; he had minutely watched the varying tints of color in the face of Agatha; and though he had no real knowledge of her further guilt, (for his question was put to her at the request of the abbot and abbess of Santa Catherina, in order to find out if she was privy to the cause of the mysterious deaths of the two nuns, Marianne and Claudina,) yet he easily discovered by her confusion that she had more to unfold.

"Beware, Agatha," said he in an enraged tone, "how you seek to deceive this.

this tribunal; know that the torturous rack awaits thee, which will force thee to confess thy guilty acts, which are so legibly impressed on thy countenance."

Agatha's fears increased, for at the mention of the rack her eyes glanced on that horrid engine of death, which was standing at no great distance from her. The sight of it palsied her frame, and for some moments she was going to make a full confession, but her resolution again returned, and she still persisted in avowing her innocence.

"Thy blood, then, Agatha," said the inquisitor, "be on thy own head, since thou art thus obstinately bent on concealing the truth."

This said, he struck the table violently with his clenched fist: the sudden noise echoing through the chamber affrighted

Agatha,

Agatha, who looked round her with a dreadful expectancy.

Four demon-looking figures immediately rushed in, and seized hold of the arms of the terrified Agatha; their gigantic forms were covered with black serge, fitted close to the body, having two holes for the eyes, and the whole of their arms from the shoulders were naked.

Agatha shrieked aloud as the first of these monsters in human shape laid his hands upon her. Accustomed to scenes of horror, the pale countenances of the inquisitors betrayed not the smallest emotion while the officials were dragging her to the rack; nor did they heed her terrible screams; she was now on the point of being laid on the torturous engine, when no longer able to bear the dreadful anticipations

ticipations of her sufferings, she faintly requested to be allowed to speak to the Grand Inquisitor. The men instantly loosed their hold, and stood by her side, while in a tremulous voice she confessed the whole of her guilty acts, implicating at the same time the Padre Bernardo, who she was igorant was at that time in the dungeon of the same inquisitional prison as herself.

The Inquisitor started with horror at her relation, while a smile of self-approbation marked the countenance of the Grand Judge on his having so successfully come to the knowledge of the mysterious fate of the two nuns.

"Thou hast done well, Agatha, to confess thy sins," said he, as soon as she had concluded, "and all the mercy this tribunal can show to such crimes as thine

shall,

shall, according to our promise, be done. An holy Dominican father shall daily attend thee, to prepare thy soul for that awful eternity to which in a few days it will hasten; meantime, hope not for a change of this decree, but in fasting, penitence, and prayers, endeavour to make some atonement for thy dreadful deeds."

The last words came not to the ears of Agatha; she sunk senseless on the floor, and the officials were ordered to convey her to her dungeon.

Padre Bernardo then entered the hall; a profound silence reigned in its gloomy interior; the eyes of the inquisitors were stedfastly fixed on him; his countenance, however, underwent no change and when the usual question was put to him as to what crime he supposed he was

accused

accused of, and which was merely asked in hopes the culprit would name some other offence than that for which he was brought before the tribunal, and so implicate himself still deeper, the monk, to the astonishment of all around, replied, that he was innocent of any crime; that it was true he was found in the dungeons of the ancient Castello with a female, but it was at her own request that he had conducted her there, after she had murdered the Signor, and that her screams which the abbot heard were occasioned by her fears of being discovered and brought to justice.

Astonishment seized the inquisitors as they listened to so palpable a falsehood, but Bernardo remained composed. He had invented this tale, as being entirely ignorant of the existence of Lorenzo, and

he thought he was as fully entitled to belief as the Signora; and he knew, as it could not be supposed he had ever seen the parties before, there was but little apparent reason to think that he would assassinate one of them.

The Grand Inquisitor, as soon as the monk's answer had been noted by the secretary, then demanded of him if in his breast there did not harbour a remembrance of any other crime than the one which he seemed to think he was accused of?

Bernardo confidently replied in the negative, while a pallid hue stole over his cheeks as he recalled to his memory the last moments of Claudina. Of that circumstance being divulged he knew he had but little reason to fear, since no one was acquainted with it but Agatha

and

and she, from self-interested motives, would not betray her knowledge of it.

"Instantly confess your crimes, or the rack shall extort them from you," vociferated the judge in an angry tone, while his countenance grew gloomy and determined.

Bernardo knowing that in persisting in his innocence was his only hope, still denied his knowledge of having committed any crime which could draw on him the anger of the holy Inquisition.

Enraged at his obstinacy, the Judge gave the signal, and the officials immediately entered the chamber.

"Put the prisoner to the question," said he, "his corporeal sufferings may make him confess."

The officials, long accustomed to their duty, took off the habit of the

monk,

monk, and tying cords round his wrists and ankles bound him to the rack; he was demanded if he would confess, which still refusing to do, his body was distended on the engine, and so severely did they apply the torture, that the monk, from the dreadful agonies he suffered became insensible, and was carried out from the hall to his cell, where a surgeon attended to recal his insensate form to animation.

On the third night he was judged sufficiently recovered to attend the second examination, and he was accordingly again conducted to the hall.

"Bernardo," said the judge, "the pains you have suffered will doubtless induce you to confess your crimes, in order to prevent a repetition of them."

"I know not," replied the monk,

what course to follow. You wish me to confess myself guilty of crimes of which I am ignorant. I have already asserted my innocence, and the tortures I suffered because I would not confess imaginary sins must convince you that I am wrongly suspected. But produce my accusers; let them tax me with my supposed guilt, I shall not be at a loss to answer them."

"I am your accuser," said a hollow female voice, which appeared close to the monk, who immediately turned about to see from whom it proceeded. No person, however, met his gaze; his visage grew of a ghastly, pallid hue; again he surveyed the chamber, the distant walls were obscured in the gloom, and there might, for ought he knew, be many people

people enveloped in the dark mantle of night which hung around.

The inquisitors marked in silence the varying hues of his countenance.

"Did not you hear a voice, Bernardo?" said the Grand Judge.

"I did," replied the monk, "but know not from whom or whence it proceeded. If indeed my accuser is here, why not let him be produced?"

The judge now made a sign to one of the inquisitors, who left the chamber. "You will presently see the person who has revealed your dark acts," said he, addressing himself to the monk; "we shall then determine whether your asseverations of your innocence be true or not."

A noise behind him of approaching paces

paces now engaged the attention of the monk: three figures advanced through the gloom toward the table; two of them, who were officials, seemed supporting the third, who had the appearance of a female, but the form being enveloped in a long sable mantle, rendered the monk doubtful.

"Thy accuser is before thee, Bernardo," said the Judge; then turning to the person who stood between the officials, "Speak now, and inform the Court of the guilty deeds of the monk."

"I accuse him of the murder of Claudina, a nun of Santa Catherina;" replied the hollow-toned voice.

The monk trembled; his quivering lips for some momrnts denied him the power of speech.

"Why

"Why do you not answer, Bernardo to this accusation?"

"I demand" said the monk, "to see my accuser."

After a short consultation the Judge directed the garment to be taken off the form of the person, when the glare of the lamp disclosed to the wretched monk the pale wan features of Agatha; who, unable to stand, was supported by the officials. Such an unexpected person, and one too who was an eye-witness of the murder of Claudina, entirely bereft him of his faculties. The powers of life seemed suspended; his eyes were stedfastly fixed with a dreadful expression of horror, surprize, and fear on the nun; his mouth was open, and his nostrils distorted.

"The knowledge of thy crimes harrow

up

up thy senses," said the Judge to the monk. "Wilt thou now confess thy guilt?"

Agatha's situation at this moment attracted the attention of the inquisitors. She appeared to be in the agonies of death; for some time the convulsed state of her frame prevented her from speaking. At length she uttered these words:

"My hour is come, in a few moments my soul, disencumbered of this form that brought on me my undoing, will appear before its Creator. Dreadful anticipation! how dreadful to me is the remembrance of my crimes. Cavini, thou who seduced me from the paths of virtue, much hast thou in me to answer for. But oh! the horrible recollection of the murder of a fellow-creature weighs most heavy on my soul; it is, I fear, a damning

weight. Bernardo, thou hast yet moments for repentance; do not thou delay, but endeavour while yet this world contains thee, to make some amends for the guilty deeds thou hast performed in it."

Here the nun paused, a second convulsive pang seized her; for some time her eyes were closed, but at length she languidly half raised them, and then in a still more faint voice continued:—

"'Tis done, Death's chilling grasp presses hard upon me. In order to avoid the horrible punishment which I well knew awaited me, I have taken poison; even now I feel the deadly potion stopping the vital current of my existence. What horrors, what despair, what torturous emotions pervade my bosom! Marianne, thou art revenged."

More words were spoken, but in so

weak

weak a tone as to be unintelligible, and now a groan announced the departure of the soul that animated her frail form. We hope that as she died repentant, the dread punishment awaiting crimes like hers was in some measure lessened.

A profound silence was observed during the last moments of Agatha, and when the breath of life had for ever fled her lips, the judge ordered her body to be taken away.

"After what has passed, Bernardo," said he, "you will doubtless no longer seek to assert your innocence. If, however, you are still obstinate, remember the rack, and yet more dreadful torments await you."

The monk, conscious that there was no hope, tremblingly confessed his sins, when the judge thus addressed him:

"Awful is the task of delivering the sentence of death; but how much more awful must it be to the ears of the guilty. Bernardo, thou hast but two days of life, employ them in repenting of thy crimes. Miserable man! as thou hopest for Heaven's mercy do not neglect this advice, for the knell of thy departing moment will soon toll."

The Grand Inquisitor here made a sign to the officials, who silently conducted the monk to his dungeon, where throwing himself on the straw that formed his bed, he long remained in a state of insensibility to every thing but the anticipation of the torments he should endure. The whole of that day he never raised his head, but when the shades of evening began to steal away the surrounding objects from the sight, he

arose, and paced the narrow confines of his cell.

He now thought of the Demon. His power was sufficient to liberate him from his present dreary abode, and he determined to solicit his assistance at this important period.

Buoyed up with fallacious hopes, he waited with anxiety for the midnight hour, when he invoked the restless enemy of man to his aid.

In a moment the Demon stood before him: on his dark countenance was strongly marked the traits of anger and impatience. "What wouldest thou with me?" said he in a voice of thunder. "Speak; for on thee I have no more time to spare. Weak, pusillanimous mortal, whose ideal fears prevented the fruition of thy soul's wishes, even when

in the silent bosom of the earth thou hadst in thy possession the fairest of Nature's works. Thou art now justly suffering for thy timidity."

The monk looked aghast at this unexpected speech, and falteringly replied, "All I now entreat of thee is my release. Through thy arts am I now condemned to die; preserve me but this once, and I will not again trouble thee."

"Mistaken mortal," said the Demon, "thou hast wrongly judged. As soon as thy soul became the abode of impure thoughts thou didst confess my sway, and seek to enrol thyself amongst the myriads whom I reign over; then, indeed, did I increase the hold I had on you, and made you subservient to my own purposes. Now, monk, thou art wholly mine; all Sicily will behold

thy torturous exit from this world ; and that thy horrors may be complete, know that the lovely maid whom you sought in order to gratify thy abandoned desires was—thy own sister."

This said, with a smile of exulting malice the Demon became invisible to the eyes of the monk, who groaned with horror at his concluding words, and raving with the dreadful sensations they excited, dashed himself against the walls of the dungeon, till at length overcome with mental and corporeal agonies, he sunk almost lifeless on the ground.

The pale reflexes of the beams of the morning which slowly entered his dungeon beheld him in his recumbent posture ; he rested his languid head on his arm, and looked at the grating which admitted the light, while the

agonizing reflection crossed his mind that he viewed it for the last time.

Hasty indeed were the hours of that day in their approach. A Dominican father entered the cell, and exhorted him to repent, but Bernardo attended not to his words. Deep sighs convulsed his form, his heart beat heavily against his side, his countenance was pale and ghastly, dreadful indeed were his anticipations, for all hope in Heaven's mercy was gone; and though his sufferings in this world would be terrible indeed, yet he feared that what he was doomed to endure in the next would be far worse.

Such were the thoughts that occupied his bosom during that day. With consternation he beheld the reflexes of the sunbeams fade away and the shades of evening lower around his cell; to him

they

they were the harbingers of his speedy sufferings, and as the mists increased, so increased the distraction of his mind.

At length but one hour was wanting to midnight; and now the heavy bell of San Dominico began to toll. Bernardo started at the sound as if it had conveyed to his form an electric spark; his breath grew short, his heart throbbed, and he trembled with inbred horrors.

A second toll gloomily echoed through his dungeon; to him it was the knell of his departure from this world; slow beating in his ears each dreaded toll increased the horror that raged in his mind, till his senses were wound up to the most excruciating acme of misery.

Foot paces now echoed along the passage that led to his cell, and the door being thrown open, the officers of the

Inquisition entered, to conduct him to the place of execution. Arrived at the court-yard of the extensive edifice, they stopped, and Bernardo raising his eyes beheld a vast concourse of people assembled to behold his dreadful torturous exit. He did not long survey them, for his gaze was attracted by a coffin, which was drawn on a hurdle and placed just before him; in it was the once-beauteous form of Agatha, now exhibiting an horrible and loathsome appearance; those cheeks, where once the rose and lily united, now robbed of their firmness and bewitching dimples, were sunk and blackened with the effects of the poison; those love-beaming eyes closed for ever, the nostrils distorted, the lips black, and decaying damps fast seizing on the livid corse.

The monk turned away his eyes; the contrast between her sad remains and the remembrance of what Agatha had been sickened his very soul, and yet he envied her situation, for she had escaped the horrible tortures now awaiting him.

From that place Bernardo was conducted to the chapel of the monastery of San Dominico, whose ponderous bell's horrific sounds long hung on the nocturnal breeze, and vexed the attendant echoes which sullenly reverberated the knell of death.

The chapel was illumined with the torches borne by the terrific-clad officials. It was crowded with the Sicilian nobility of both sexes, from motives of religion as well as curiosity.

Bernardo was brought into the centre of the chapel; he was scarcely able to

stand; he never raised his head, but remained trembling with the awful horrors inspired by his situation, while the secretary of the Inquisition read aloud the dark confessions of his crimes.

A burst of horror ran through the assembly when he had concluded. The monk was then formally excommunicated the church, and the attending officials taking off his habit, put on him the dreadful garment allotted to the incurables; thus delivered over to laical authority, his body was sentenced to be consumed by flames till his soul should desert its agonized abode.

The procession now began to move forward from the gates of the chapel to the place where the fatal stake was prepared.

First advanced the Grand Inquisitor,

in his splendid robes of office, attended by some of his colleagues, and the superior of the monastery of San Dominica, the patron of that terrible society; next came the friars two and two, bearing the banners and other insignia of the Inquisition; then came the hurdle on which was the body of Agatha, drawn by persons who had incurred the displeasure of the holy office, and were sentenced to perform many acts of penance in extenuation of their crimes; to them was allotted the task of fixing the fatal stake and placing the faggots round it. Following the hurdle came the wretched Bernardo; after him the crucifix with its back toward him, was borne by other Dominican monks, with a long train of lay brethren, and many of the nobility, who on this occasion shewed their zeal

by

by joining in the procession, and carrying wax tapers; the officers of the Inquisition walked on each side, bearing torches, whose flames cast a lurid glare over the solemn train.

During this time the bell of San Dominica still continued its deadly tolls, and excepting its melancholy sounds, notwithstanding the astonishing concourse of spectators who thronged to see the awful scene, scarcely a murmur disturbed the silence which prevailed.

The miserable Bernardo was now led forward and chained to the fatal stake, and the faggots placed around him. Near him was laid the body of Agatha, and now the torches were applied to the pile.

Deep sighs and groans were heard from the assembly as the crackling wood

began

began to flame around the monk, who as the wind often drove the fire against him shrieked out with the pain.

At this moment what must have been his sensations? on the very verge of an eternity to which the most excruciating corporeal tortures were quickly hastening him, and where he had every reason to suppose his sufferings would be far worse; for could *he* hope for mercy who had never shown it? who could coolly deliberate on the murder of a fellow-creature, who could behold the quivering limbs of the expiring Claudina, the convulsed heavings of her bosom, till her last breath escaped her, and who could plunge his dagger in the bosom of another, before the very altar where was raised the crucified form of the Saviour,

of

of the World, who died to expiate the crimes of mankind?

The smoke and flames now obscured the form of the monk; his agonizing shrieks became more dreadful, till at length they ceased to harrow up the feelings of the surrounding multitude, who still looked on the flaming pile with sensations of horror more easily conceived than described.

Unseen by mortal vision the Demon stretched on high his gigantic form before the flames which were consuming the body of the monk; a malicious grin sat horribly on his features as he surveyed him writhing with agony; and when his soul fluttered on his half-burnt lips the Demon seized it in his piercing iron grasp, and darting through the cleft bo-

som of the globe, winged his rapid flight along the broad path made by sin and death through the regions of chaos and ancient night, and arriving at his horrible domains, dashed far from him into the burning lake his immortal burthen, and casting a look of defiance toward the abode of blissful spirits, strode over the burning billows, plotting fresh schemes to entrap unwary mortals, to show his irreconcileable and deadly hate.

Thus perished Agatha and Bernardo; the hapless nun, by becoming the instrument of her own dissolution, increased her heavy load of crimes. Such is too often the termination of the existence of the female who listens to the syren voice of seduction. Gay, unthinking man, you know not what you do when urged by momentary passion you

deprive an unsuspecting, confiding woman of her honor; she then becomes avoided by her own sex, and despised by the other. No wonder then, abandoned by all that is good, she becomes herself the votary of vice, and advancing progressively from one sin to another, forgets that there is a Heaven, forgets that she has an immortal soul, and self-murdered dies, invoking curses on her seducer.

Here we will conclude this chapter, and though the pen has imperfectly endeavoured to show the miseries of vice, yet we trust that some moral may be gleaned from it.

Let the lovely female consider how miserable was Agatha from the first moment she yielded to Cavini; distress and horror attended her steps; one

crime

crime led to another, till murder crowned the end. Let her sad story arm her with resolntion to steel her bosom against the soft advances of love and the empassioned language of the seducer.

Perhaps too the fate of Bernardo will be a lesson to unwary youth to guard well against the strong impulse of vice, and to resist its specious advances.—"Vice to be hated needs but to be seen."

CHAP. XXII.

FROM such scenes of horror, and the painful reflections naturally produced by them, we will return to the monastery within whose walls Lorenzo and Angelina now resided.

The senses of that lovely woman were still wandering, nor were the nuns able to say or do any thing that could calm the mental agonies which had hurled reason from her seat. She raved about Lorenzo, then thought she saw the Conte Angelo, and shrunk from the ideal touch of the monk Bernardo. The sisters looked on in mournful silence, for the sight of an innocent creature la-

bouring

bouring under such torturous sensations as did Angelina, was more than the most insensate could view without pity.

The abbot Ignazio, after he had given directions respecting the confinement of the nun and the monk, returned to the chamber, where Lorenzo impatiently awaited him; who when he heard the situation of Angelina started from his couch. "Oh! father," he exclaimed, "I entreat you to let me see her; the voice of love will recal her wandering senses; do not, I conjure you, refuse me this request."

"My son," replied the abbot, "your present weak state will incapacitate you for such a task; seek now repose, think that Angelina is safe from all persecution, wait till the morning is far advanced,

ced, and should she not then be any better, I shall permit you to see her."

This said, the abbot departed, and left Lorenzo with the good father Nicolo, who did all in his power to comfort his patient, and frequently went to see Angelina, in hopes of being able to administer some composing medicine. Sister Ursula was also unremitting in her attentions; but still their lovely patient was insensible to them, and alive only to recollections which harrowed up all her faculties to the wild pith of dilirium.

At length father Nicolo persuaded the abbot to give permission to Lorenzo to see Angelina; he supported his faint steps to the chamber belonging to the porteress, and when the nun had retired, was allowed to enter it. He

there beheld his adored love seated on the side of the couch, her lovely hair all dishevelled, her features wild and convulsed, her gaze vacant and unsettled, and her hands clasped in each other.

When Lorenzo entered he started back, horror-struck at her appearance. She, however, took no notice of him, though her eyes evidently were at that moment turned toward the door. Deeply affected he advanced, and kneeling at her feet, took her passive hand, and conjured her to speak to him. At the sound of his voice Angelina started; she raised her hands, and covered her face.

"'Tis his voice—he calls me from the grave, and thinks me unkind to stay so long from him. There he lies cold and motionless, his soul now hovers round me.

me. Oh! Lorenzo! I will soon be with thee."

"Angelina, you are now with your Lorenzo; look on me, recollect your fond lover."

Angelina let her hands fall from her face; she looked on Lorenzo. Some faint recollections returned, and she burst into tears.

Father Nicolo appeared much pleased with this favourable symptom; he then, though with some difficulty, made her take the contents of a small phial.

"Her senses," said he to Lorenzo, "are now returning; this medicine will, I hope, give her some repose; meanwhile do you, my son, withdraw. I will watch her slumbers; for should she recollect you before she is prepared for *such* an event, the sudden transition from

grief

grief to joy may be more than her frame, enfeebled by her sufferings, will permit her to support."

Lorenzo saw the prudence of such a step; and, having kissed Angelina's hand, he slowly withdrew, in the sweet hope that in a short time she would recover. He now bethought himself of Carlo and Annetta; and, on inquiring of the porter of the monastery, learned that those faithful creatures were quite distracted with the intelligence they had received from him, and had on their knees begged to be admitted, a favour which however could not be allowed them, consistent with the rigid rules of the monastery.

Lorenzo immediately repaired to the grate, where he beheld them sitting sorrowfully on the steps of the portal;

their joy on seeing him was great, but it was much increased by the hope he seemed to entertain of Angelina's recovery.

Father Nicolo meantime attentively watched over his lovely patient, who yielding to the influence of the medicine he had given her, sunk soon after into a profound slumber.

It was not till the evening that Angelina awoke. She started on seeing father Nicolo and Ursula by the side of the pallet; her recollection returned, and in a soft, tremulous voice she uttered the name of Lorenzo, while a long and painful sigh, issued from herbosom.

"Compose yourself, daughter," said Nicolo, "all may yet be well; do not give way to grief."

"Oh! father, how can all be well?

how

how can I ever cease to grieve? for is not my Lorenzo lost to me for ever in this world?"

"How do you know that he is dead?" said the father, delighted to find that she was now sensible. "Your fears, Angelina, are premature."

"What do you say?" hastily she replied; "is then Lorenzo living? Ah! father, do not give me false hopes."

"The Saints forbid that I should seek to deceive you, daughter, when I tell you that Lorenzo de Montalto yet lives"

"Yet lives did you say? Ah! let me see him, let me attend his couch, and receive his last sighs, they will be breathed for his Angelina."

"Far distant be his last sighs," returned the monk; long may he live to

return your love; his wounds, Signora, are not dangerous, nor is he confined to his couch, he was in this room this morning, but you knew him not."

Thus did the Padre Nicolo cautiously acquaint Angelina with the existence of her lover. For awhile she was silent, but her clasped hands and uplifted eyes showed her engaged in mental thanksgiving to the Almighty disposer of events.

"And shall I see him, father?" said she at length, looking on the monk with an inquiring, supplicating gaze.

"If you will promise to be composed I will bring him to you," replied Nicolo, "but I almost fear to do it, lest your agitation should be the cause of delaying your recovery."

"Oh! no, father," replied Angelina, "believe

"believe me I will endeavour to restrain the tide of extreme joy which swells in my bosom."

Nicolo then left the chamber, and assisted Angelina to rise from the couch, and seat herself in a large chair. She was very weak, but the fever of delirium had entirely subsided, her eyes had assumed their natural sweetness of expression, and the red flushing on her cheeks had given way to the delicate lily-tinted rose.

Ursula acquainted her with the wonderful events which had taken place in the monastery and convent; and when she heard that her persecutor, the monk Bernardo, was in the relentless hands of the Inquisition, her forgiving spirit made her forget the dreadful wrongs he intended her, and she sighed at his situ-

ation. The melancholy thoughts exited by the information of Ursula were, however, soon dissipated by the entrance of father Nicolo and Lorenzo.

To describe their meeting, to give but a faint idea of the rapturous sensations of their bosoms, exceed the pen. The good old sister Ursula and father Nicolo could not unmoved behold the tender scene that presented itself, a tear stole down their cheeks, and they breathed a fervent prayer for their happiness in this world.

Lorenzo, when at length he was able to leave Angelina, proceeded to the abbot Ignazio, whom he made acquainted with every circumstance relative to Angelina and himself, not forgetting to mention the Conte's violation of his oath, and base attempts against the peace of

his

his ward; he then entreated that as Angelina would not permit him to make his conduct to her public, on account of her father's revered memory, he would take her under his protection and unite them; slightly hinting at the same time his fears that if Angelo knew where his ward was, the sanctity of the convent would not be a sufficient security against his attempts.

The haughty abbot fired at this last idea, replied, "The Signora Angelina need not be under any apprehensions from laical power, for while within these walls I will protect her from the daring Angelo; who should he be presumptuous enough to appear before the gates with hostile intents, shall quickly find a residence in the dungeons of the Inquisition; and I further promise you, that

as soon as the Signora is recovered, you shall be united to her."

Lorenzo was pleased to find that he had a powerful friend in the abbot, and having expressed his gratitude to him for his goodness, retired. And now did he again admit to his bosom a pleasing train of joyful anticipations of days of happiness and unalloyed delights, he retired to rest while visions of blissful import crowded to his ideal view, and the healing powers of sleep repaired his care and pain-worn frame.

The absence of Angelina and Annetta from the Castello de Carlentini was discovered early the next morning. To describe the rage of the Conte is impossible; for it was on that day that he had determined to force her into a marriage. Parties were sent out in every direction after

after them, but to no purpose; at length the clothes which they had left behind them in the wood being found, not only acquainted Angelo with their probable route, but also that the object of his persecution was under the protection of his hated rival, Lorenzo de Montalto.

He now determined to search after the fugitives himself; and attended by his people, took the road that led to the monastery of Santa Catherina. The confused reports which he collected from the peasantry who resided near the monastery of the late wonderful events which had taken place there induced him to make inquiries at it; and as he was approaching the gates he had a slight glimpse of the persons of Carlo and Annetta, who, terrified at his appearance, fled for protection into the chapel.

Angelo on inquiring at the gate learn that the object of his pursuit was within its walls, and instantly demanded to see the abbot.

If Ignazio had not been previously prejudiced against the Conte by the recital of Lorenzo, his present conduct was sufficient to stir up all his ready pride and indignation. He slowly entered the parlour whither the Conte had been conducted, and then in no very complacent terms demanded the purport of his visit.

His stern deportment somewhat confused the Conte, who began to fear that he should have some difficulty in persuading him to accede to his wishes in delivering up Angelina; and assuming a respectful tone, he thus replied:—

"Holy father, I come to request you

will

will deliver to me the Signora Angelina, whose guardian I am by the authority of her departed parent."

"Angelina," replied the abbot, "claims the protection of the Church against your persecutions, Conte; nor shall it be withheld from her. I am informed of the oath you took before the venerable abbess of the convent of Santa Maria, and I grieve to hear that you have, unmindful of that sacred promise, persisted in endeavouring to bring your vile plans into effect. Unless she wishes it, the Signora shall not again be in your power; nay more, I have given my promise to Lorenzo de Montalto to unite them."

The Conte, exasperated to the highest pitch at the speech of the abbot, could scarcely articulate his words.

"Beware,"

"Beware," said he, "how you do such an act. Angelina is my ward; her fortune is at my disposal if she marries without my consent; and I have also witnesses to prove that she made a solemn promise at the altar to be mine."

"A forced oath," said the abbot "and from which the power of the Church releases her. Your conduct has proved how unfit you are to be the guardian of Angelina; and when it is represented to the King, her fortune doubtless will be restored to her."

The Conte bit his lips; he looked blackly at the abbot, who eyed him with a haughty look; and then rising from his seat, said:—

"I have no time, Conte, for further converse; you know my resolutions."

"And you will marry Angelina to

that

that impostor Lorenzo," hastily said the Conte?

The abbot slightly moved his head in token of his intentions to that effect.

"Then beware the consequences, which shall heavily revert on yourself, proud abbot," vociferated the enraged Angelo.

"How," said the abbot, "is it that you address me? Know that I smile at your threats; and to prove how little I heed them, be in the chapel an hour hence, and you shall witness the nuptial ceremony of Lorenzo and Angelina. Nor is that all, Conte. Tremble," added he, looking darkly at him, "lest the Inquisition take cognizance of your contemptuous and insulting conduct to a minister of the holy church, and within its sacred inclosures."

This

This said, he left the parlour, and the Conte to his own thoughts. He already began to fear that he had said too much, and the last words of the abbot did indeed make him tremble; he saw that all hopes of his getting Angelina in his power were now at an end; still, however, he determined to withhold her estates. This idea in some measure served to console him under his present fears and disappointments; and he left the monastery determined to repair to the Castello directly, and there await the result of the abbot's threats; for he was fearful of again seeing him, lest he should provoke him further, and make him put them in execution.

When the abbot left the parlour he immediately sent for Lorenzo, who in his ruffled countenance and dark looks easily

perceived

perceived something unusual had taken place.

"The Conte Angelo has been here," said he, "his comportment has been such as confirms your relation. Insolent, ignorant man, not to know the respect due to my dignified station, or the danger of insulting the ministers of the holy church; but I shall teach him that we are not to be insulted with impunity; and to show him the utter contempt in which I hold his threats, will instantly ratify my promise made to you, therefore be in the chapel at the expiration of an hour, and I will unite you to the Signora Angelina."

Lorenzo joyfully expressed his grateful thanks to the abbot, which he received with silent state, while his angry looks showed him what he was now go-

ing

ing to do was from motives of revenge for insulted pride, more than any wish to hasten the happy termination of his cares respecting his adored Angelina.

He immediately hastened to her, and disclosed the joyful tidings, which she deeply blushing received, and Annetta being admitted to her, prepared for the ceremony.

At the appointed hour she descended to the corridore which communicated with the monastery; there she found the impatient Lorenzo waiting her approach. She had thrown off her pilgrim's weeds, and was habited in a robe of white, which was confined to her slender waist by a circlet of diamonds; her hair was fancifully braided, and curled over her polished forehead. Thus simply attired she shone forth in all her natural charms,

added

added to which was the blissful possession of innocence and virtue.

Lorenzo led her to the altar, where the abbot Ignazio performed the nuptial ceremony; while his eyes, which yet retained an indignant expression, were often raised in expectation of seeing Conte Angelo enter the chapel, a circumstance which would have gratified the haughty abbot, as it would have afforded him an opportunity of triumphing over the Conte.

Angelina, the lovely, fascinating Angelina, was now irrevocably Lorenzo's, and he sealed the happy contract on her coral lips. The abbot condescendingly gave them his benediction, and apparently vexed that Angelo did not appear, retired to his apartments.

Lorenzo passed that day with his be-

loved Angelina. Still, however, his happiness was somewhat alloyed from his apprehensions of the vindictive Conte, who he concluded was laying in wait for him, and from the number of his followers, both himself and Angelina would become an easy prey. The soul of Lorenzo knew not fear but for his Angelina, and he secretly determined to put a stop to his inquietude on that head.

As it was necessary that Lorenzo should inform his father, the Marchese de Montalto, of his marriage with Angelina, he now quitted the monastery, leaving her in the care of the kind and attentive nuns. Attended by Carlo, he soon arrived at his father's palazio, and disclosed to him his marriage with the heiress of Carlentini. The venerable Marchese congratulated his son on such

an acquisition, for the beauties and virtues of Angelina were not unknown to him. With respect to the Conte Angelo retaining her possessions, he determined to have a private audience of the Monarch, who he well knew would see justice done to the oppressed.

Lorenzo now attended by a numerous party of retainers suitable to his father's rank, unknown to the Marchese repaired to the Castello de Carlentini, where he openly challenged the Conte Angelo to single combat. This he however tremblingly refused to accept, alledging as an excuse the weak state of his frame from his late wounds.

Meantime the old Marchese had seen the King, who justly incensed at the present as well as former conduct of Angelo, condemned him to be banished, and

the estates of Carlentini to be immediately restored to Angelina.

As Lorenzo was returning from the Castello he met with a party of the King's troops, who were charged with carrying his orders into effect, and Lorenzo had the pleasure of seeing the Conte shortly after conducted by them to the place of his destination, accompanied by his ready agent Hildargo.

The Castello was soon prepared for the reception of its rightful possessors, and Lorenzo hastened back to the convent of Santa Catherina, where he disclosed to Angelina the events that had taken place.

She immediately accompanied him to their future peaceful residence. At the entrance of the valley the numerous peasantry in their best attire met them, and

hailed

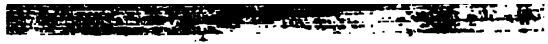
hailed their coming with acclamations of heartfelt joy. It was not without emotion that either Angelina or Lorenzo heard their honest declarations; and when they had arrived at the Castello, ordered ample refreshments to be provided for them.

Light and airy Sicilian measures floated on the air till a late hour, the moon lent her silver beams, and the tranquil nocturnal zephyrs were undisturbed by angry gales; all was peace and joy; Content, with all her smiling offspring, presided over the Val di Carlentini.

Annetta a few days after was united to Carlo, and an ample independence presented them by Lorenzo and his Angelina; but they preferred staying at the Castello, to enjoy the happiness which reigned undisturbed in its walls.

Here

Here these eventful pages terminate. Weak indeed have been the efforts of the pen to pourtray the dangers of giving way to vicious inclinations, and to impress the instructive moral. Fain would it endeavour to elevate the mind, to show vice in its true colours, how hateful, how deformed; to show the blessings ever attendant on the votaries of virtue, and how in every situation an all-seeing Providence watches over and protects his creatures, hurling destruction on their oppressors. Such was the aim with which they were written; if happily they should succeed, great will be the gratification; and should they fail, still there will be this consolation—that their intent was good.

THE END.

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